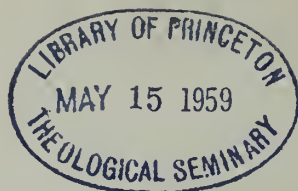


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Thomas Pothacamury

The Church in Independent India

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WORLD HORIZON REPORTS

Report No. 22

THE CHURCH IN INDEPENDENT INDIA

By

Archbishop Thomas Pothacamury, D.D.

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The Church in Independent India

✓
THOMAS POTHACAMURY, D.D.
Archbishop of Bangalore

✕ *WORLD HORIZON REPORTS*

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About the Author . . .

The Most Reverend Thomas Pothacamury, D.D., has been head of the episcopal see of Bangalore, South India, since 1942. Born at Ravipada, India, a member of the forceful Telegu people, he took Holy Orders in 1916. The early years of his priesthood were spent in apostolic work among the poor of Madras. As editor of the Madras Leader, His Grace showed himself to be a clear effective Christian writer on contemporary India. He is General Secretary of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India.

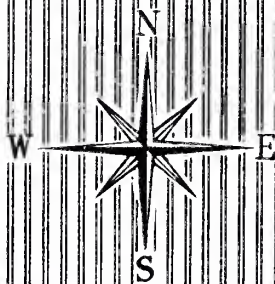
I. India and the Church Today

TODAY India commands world attention and respect hitherto unknown and unheard of in her long and chequered career. The tremendous advance India has made in every direction during the ten years of her independence has won wide admiration and given her the key position among the countries of Asia.

The Catholic population of India played a loyal and patriotic part in the achievement of the country's independence, and the Church's position at the present time reflects the nation's appreciation of those efforts. The primary contribution of Catholics was their promotion of national unity among all classes and creeds of the population. The educational and humanitarian agencies of the Church have proved themselves to be a great welding catalyst for social solidarity.


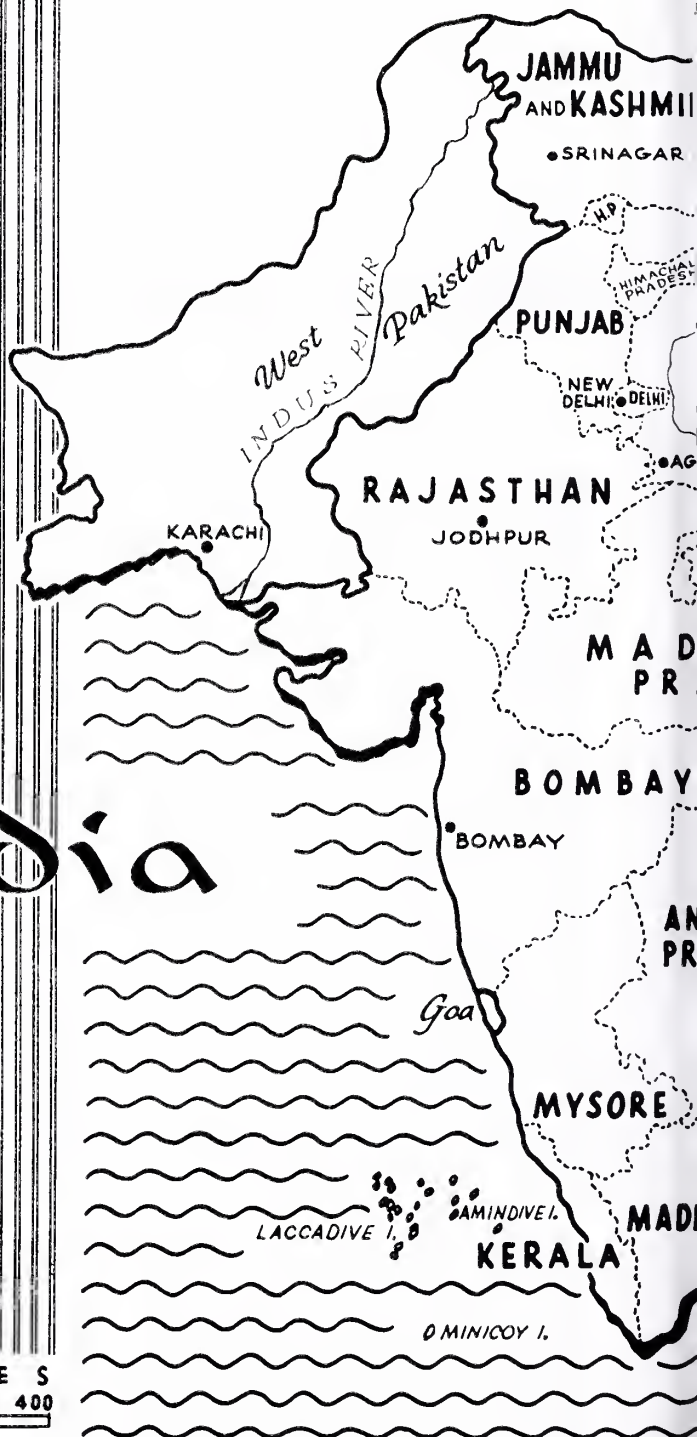
Politically, India's Catholics share, as they have always shared, the common ideals and aims of their fellow countrymen. They are united with other Indians in deep esteem and heartfelt affection for such great leaders as the late Mahatma Gandhi, chief architect of India's freedom; the late Sardar Vallabhai Patel; Pandit Jawaharal Nehru, the Prime Minister; Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the President of the Indian Republic; and Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the Vice President.

Our profound respect for these national leaders stems not only from their exemplary patriotism, but also -- and primarily -- from a studied admiration of their integrity of character, their sense of justice and fair play towards all communities and religions. India's Prime Minister, although himself a believer in no formal religious body, is particularly outstanding for sterling qualities -- nobility of mind, truth, honesty, and justice. He is the idol of the whole nation, and of Catholic India. Like the great Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. Nehru fought bravely against the colonial occupation of India. He spent

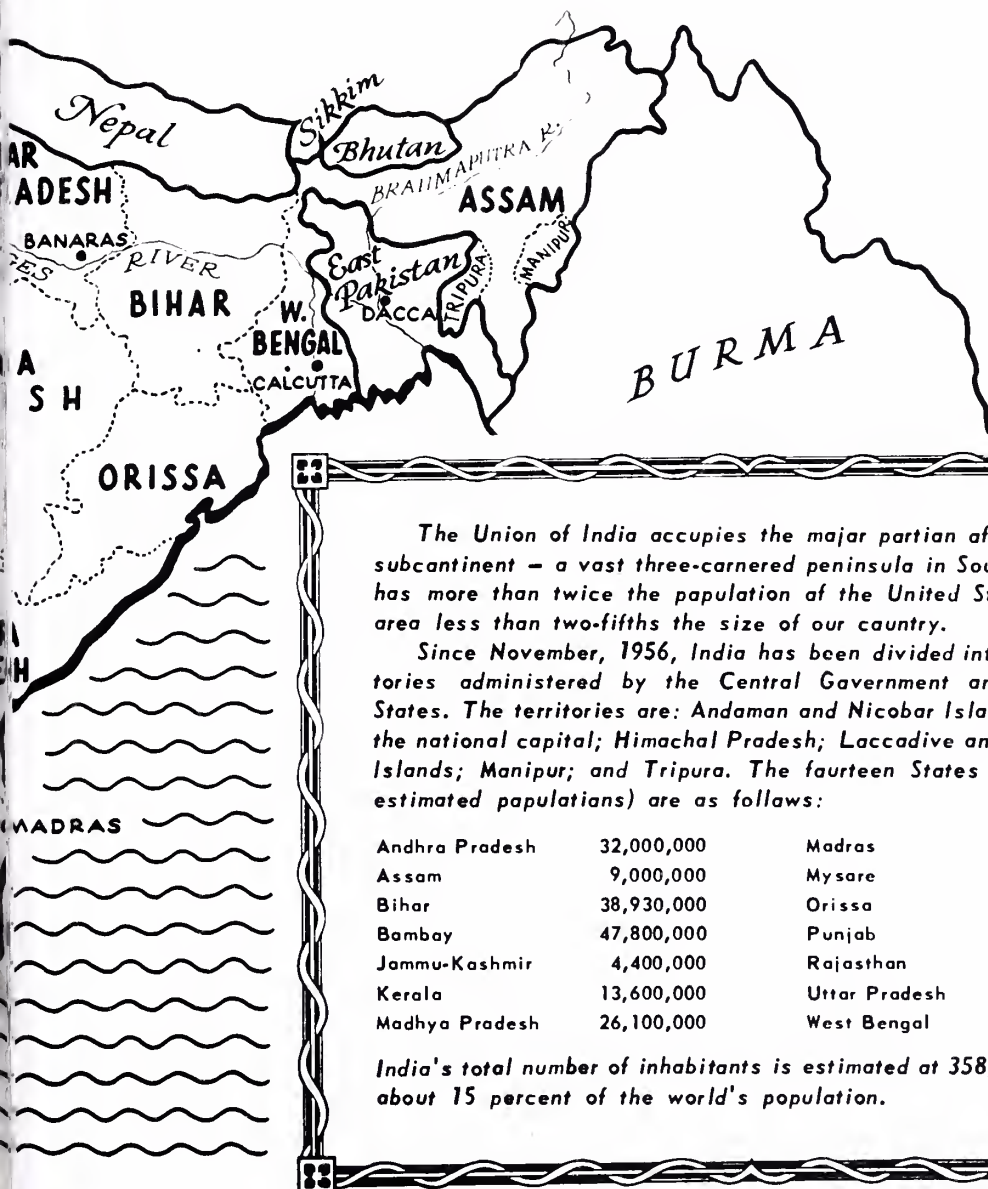


SCALE OF MILES

0 100 200 300 400

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C H I N A



The Union of India occupies the major portion of the Indian subcontinent — a vast three-cornered peninsula in South Asia. It has more than twice the population of the United States in an area less than two-fifths the size of our country.

Since November, 1956, India has been divided into six territories administered by the Central Government and fourteen States. The territories are: Andaman and Nicobar Islands; Delhi, the national capital; Himachal Pradesh; Laccadive and Amindive Islands; Manipur; and Tripura. The fourteen States (with their estimated populations) are as follows:

Andhra Pradesh	32,000,000	Madras	30,000,000
Assam	9,000,000	Mysore	19,000,000
Bihar	38,930,000	Orissa	14,600,000
Bombay	47,800,000	Punjab	16,000,000
Jammu-Kashmir	4,400,000	Rajasthan	16,000,000
Kerala	13,600,000	Uttar Pradesh	63,200,000
Madhya Pradesh	26,100,000	West Bengal	26,160,000

India's total number of inhabitants is estimated at 358,000,000 — about 15 percent of the world's population.

many years of his life in prison on behalf of the cause of Indian liberty. And yet, he is not inspired by any petty sense of narrow prejudice against the British. Under his capable leadership India has come safely through the difficult early years of political independence, gaining widespread sympathy for our people and their aspirations among the nations of the world.

DAWN OF FREEDOM

On August 15, 1947, India attained freedom and independence. With the people of our immense country, Catholics rejoiced in the hard-won triumph that culminated more than a half-century struggle. The battle had not been one of arms, but of ideologies; and on that battleground India's national aspirations had surpassed British genius and ingenuity. A glorious era for all free peoples dawned when the British Government, conscious of the strength of India's national movement and of the ability of our nation's statesmen to rule the country and shape its destinies, handed over the the administrative machinery to the representative leaders of India.

Shortly after midnight on August 14, 1947, at the historic session of the Constituent Assembly, the members pledged and dedicated themselves "to the service of the people of India to the end that this ancient land might attain her rightful place in the world, and make her full and willing contribution to the promotion of world peace and the welfare of mankind."

BISHOPS WELCOME FREEDOM

Anticipating the achievement of national independence, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of July, 1947 acclaimed the spirit of good will and cordiality between the British Government and the Indian statesmen in reaching the momentous agreement. The Conference further asserted that the Church was not concerned with political issues and changes as such, since her primary interest centered about spiritual values and the influence of these values on the character and lives of men. Yet the Church was not unmindful of the temporal needs and the social prosperity of the people.

The statement of the hierarchy included an exhortation to all Catholics "to give their best to the motherland, to serve as a bond of union among sections which may be kept apart from one another by suspicion or discord, and to avail themselves of every opportunity to foster a sense of unity and solidarity, so that peace, brotherly love and happiness may reign among all." Catholics of India, the statement also declared, must "stand united with the numerous elements of their countrymen in the effort and determination of a great and thriving land, worthy of her ancient culture and her glorious past." Thus the leaders of the Church expressed their positive attitude

towards India's new political status. And their words were echoed by all of India's Catholics - priests, Brothers, Sisters and members of the laity - who felt an immense joy and pride in the emancipation of their country from colonial rule.

PREAMBLE OF LIBERTY

The Constituent Assembly met on December 9, 1946 to draft a Constitution for independent India. Catholics and Protestants were represented in the session. Three years later, on November 26, 1949, the Assembly had formulated the document that became the basis of all Indian law on January 26, 1950. January 26th was already a memorable date. On that day, twenty years earlier, the National Congress had issued India's Declaration of Independence and pledged itself to the attainment of that independence.

The preamble of the Constitution of India is significant to every member of that nation. It begins as follows:

"We, the People of India, having strongly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Democratic Republic and to secure to all its citizens

JUSTICE, social, economic, political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and unity of the Nation;

in our Constituent Assembly do hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves this Constitution."

INDIA - A SECULAR DEMOCRATIC STATE

The Constitution designates the Republic of India as a secular democratic State. "A secular State," Pandit Nehru wrote on August 9, 1954, "does not mean a State where religion, as such, is discouraged. It means freedom of religion and conscience." To Parliament he declared that the term "secular" does not mean that "religion ceases to be an important factor in the private life of an individual. It means that the State and religion are not tied together. It simply means the cardinal doctrine of modern practice, the separation of the State from religion, and the full protection of every religion."

By definition, therefore, the civil government favors no single religion, but grants to every citizen equal status and opportunity before the law. Freedom from religious discrimination and freedom of conscience and religion are to be safe-guarded for every citizen by the Supreme Court of India.

The provision of these civil rights are contained in the following articles of India's Constitution:

- Article 14: "The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India."
- Article 15: "The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth . . ."
- Article 16: No. 1: "There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State."
 No. 2: "No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence . . ., be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect of, any employment or office under the State."
- Article 19: "All citizens shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression; to form associations or unions; to acquire, hold, dispose of property; and to practice any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business."

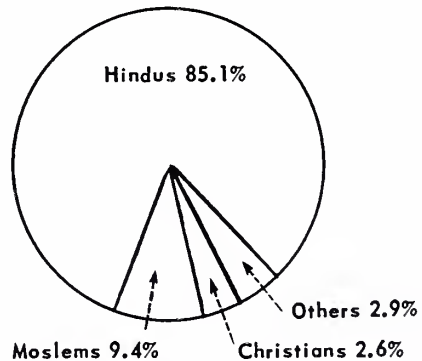
FREEDOM OF RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

Besides these assurances of personal liberty, the Constitution also gives specific, positive and definite guarantees to all religious groups that enable them to carry out their appropriate activities without let or hindrance. Careful consideration and considerable discussion in the Constituent Assembly preceded the acceptance and adoption of the working of the article on religious freedom. Religious freedom in the Constitution includes the

INDIA'S RELIGIONS

The percentual strength of India's religions is shown on the graph. Numerical statistics are as follows:

Hindus	304,000,000
Moslems	35,000,000
Christians	10,000,000
Others	9,000,000
	<u>358,000,000</u>



Note: The above figures are approximate estimates, since exact statistics are hard to obtain in India. The last census, taken in 1951, listed 356,879,394 inhabitants; and some authorities place the present population figure as high as 377,000,000. Of India's 10,000,000 Christians, slightly more than half are Catholics. Under "Others" are listed Sikhs, Jains, Zoroastrians, Buddhists, Jews and some smaller religious communities.

right of religious denominations to establish and maintain their own religious and charitable institutions, to manage their own affairs in matters of religion, to own and acquire movable and immovable property, and to administer such property according to law.

Article 25: Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this Part, all persons are equally entitled to the freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion."

Article 26: "Subject to public order, morality and health, every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right:

- a) to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes;
- b) to manage its own affairs in matters of religion;
- c) to own and acquire movable and immovable property; and
- d) to administer such property in accordance with law."

Article 28, No. 1: "No religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution wholly maintained out of State funds."

No. 3: "No person attending any educational institution recognized by the State or receiving aid out of State funds shall be required to take part in any religious instruction that may be imparted in such institution or to attend any religious worship that may be conducted in such institution or in any premises attached thereto unless such person or, if such person is a minor, his guardian has given his consent thereto.

Article 29, No. 2: "No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language . . ."

Article 30, No. 1: "All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice."

No. 3: "The State shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language."

It is clear from the above points that India's position on the individual's right to the free and unhampered practice of religion is unequivocal. What she guarantees to her own citizens she also upholds for members of other nations, for India wholeheartedly supports the United Nations in its declaration of freedom of religion: "Every one has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom either alone or in community with others, and in public or private, to manifest his religious belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."

RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

Before the drafting and adoption of the Constitution, all religious minorities felt a deep concern for the preservation and protection of their religious beliefs and practices. Members of the Christian churches welcomed the establishment in 1946 of an Advisory Committee for the Protection of the Rights of Minorities. Excellent use of this opportunity was made by Catholics to explain to representatives of the Committee the position the Church would assume in a free India. Thanks to the sincerity of the Catholic spokesmen, the Advisory Committee proved to be sympathetic to the Catholic viewpoint.

Having assurance of the constitutional guarantees of the free practice of religion, the Christian groups addressed a memorandum to the President and leaders of the National Congress Party surrendering, in the interest of national unity, their privilege of separate representation in the Legislature on the basis of their religious beliefs.

This gesture of goodwill on the part of the Christian minority groups was warmly welcomed by the late Sardar Vallabhai Patel. In his remarks he urged the majority community "to have confidence in the minority community," and exhorted it to conduct itself "in such a way as to win and retain the confidence of minorities." By their act, Sardar Patel declared, the minority had laid "the foundations for a truly secular, democratic State, where everyone is equal in every way to everyone else. May God give us wisdom and courage," he prayed, "to do the right thing to all manner of people as our Constitution provides."

It is a pleasant duty to acknowledge here that Mr. Patel's declaration has been faithfully carried out by the Congress Party which has controlled India's Government ever since independence. At the general elections of 1957, for example, the Congress Party took particular pains to secure adequate representation for the Moslem and Christian minorities. This fairness on the part of the Congress Party leaders has created a most favorable impression on minorities throughout the country.

OPPOSITION TO RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

To return once more to the constitutional rights on the freedom of religion, the concession of the right "freely to . . . propagate religion" was passed over the opposition of several influential personages. Their chief reasons for desiring to withhold this right were based on the following arguments: (1) Religion had been in the past the cause of division in the country. The Moslems had established a precedent by agitating for and obtaining a separate State -- Pakistan -- on religious and cultural grounds; (2) the Christian faith, essentially and consciously a missionary religion, could conceivably

increase its membership to the point where it would become a majority group in an area. Christians might then cause political unrest by demanding that that area be set up as a separate Christian State.

These objections to the "freedom to propagate religion" were ably answered by several Congress leaders, and the heated discussion occasioned fine tributes to the Christian community. Pandit Laksmi Kant Maitra declared: "This glorious land will lose its spiritual values and heritage if the right to practice and propagate religion is not recognized as a fundamental right. The observations made against the proselytizing activities of Christians are to be deprecated. The Indian Christian community is the most inoffensive community in the country."

Mr. Krishnaswami Bharati observed that the Indian Christian community had "never transgressed the legitimate propagation of their religious views." The present Finance Minister of the Indian Union, Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari, stated that, in his opinion, the "country had reached a stage at which regardless of the religion a man professes, he should have the right to practice his religion fully."

India is indebted to such men as these for the inclusion in its Constitution of one of the fundamental rights of religion - the right to propagate itself. Although many of these farseeing political figures are not themselves Christians, they merit the heartfelt gratitude of India's Catholics. By their noble and courageous defence of the rights of a minority, they have set for the whole people of India a splendid example of religious tolerance and political democracy. For the policy that they advocated was a fundamental question to the Church. Thus from the beginning of our national independence, we Catholics have been free to preach the Gospel of Christ to the millions of our fellow citizens who have been born and raised outside the true Church.

INDIA - LAND OF MANY FAITHS

The overwhelming majority (about 85 percent) of India's 358,000,000 people are Hindus. Moslems number some 35,000,000. Christians are the third largest group - 10,000,000 - and more than half of them are Catholics; the rest belong to Protestant or Jacobite churches. In addition, there are several millions of people who profess adherence to smaller religious groups -- Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Zoroastrians and Jews.

Since the Constitution safeguards the fundamental rights of religion and education in India, Catholics have a firm sense of security in the practice of their own faith among their countrymen of diverse creeds. These fundamental religious rights are not mere abstractions. They have been vigorously upheld by the President of India, the Prime Minister and other national leaders in the Central and State Governments. Repeated and emphatic pronouncements by India's leaders furnish evidence of the general attitude of fairness towards

all beliefs that is found among elected and appointed officials of the Government.

Moreover, India's tradition is one of religious toleration. There is probably no other great country in the world where people are so fundamentally religious-minded as India. Indians instinctively attribute their joys and sorrows and the tenor of their everyday life in the material and spiritual sphere to the wisdom and providence of the Supreme Invisible Power. Absolute religious freedom has always been recognized as the surest path to the peaceful co-existence of diverse communities and to co-operation of all elements of the population for national unity and well-being.

DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION OF THE VATICAN

Proof of India's recognition of the unique position of the Catholic Church and of her supranational and universal character was accorded when diplomatic relations were established, on August 15, 1948, between our young Republic and the Vatican.

Mr. Dirajlal Desai, the first Indian Ambassador to the Holy See, on presenting his credentials, gave testimony of India's reverence for Christ and His messengers in our country. He stated that India was a new State, "created by the sacrifices of the people, guided by one (Mahatma Gandhi) who sought to mould his life according to the message of Christ. He (Gandhi) was the source of India's strength; he affirmed the oneness of God and the greatness of the religious ideal proclaimed in the Sermon on the Mount. Hence we have set ourselves the ideal of a secular State, in which all men of good will may, in peace and harmony, enjoy perfect liberty."

FRANK DISCUSSION

The Catholic Church in India is not without its problems - important and pressing problems. The happy relationship between Catholics and other groups has cooled since the first days of the Republic heralded joy and sweetness. Misunderstandings and suspicions were brewed, unconsciously at times, and at times deliberately. A discussion of Catholic India's difficulties, however, must always begin with the declaration of the Church's basic optimism that is founded upon the guarantees of the Constitution of the country, the integrity of the nation's leaders, and the underlying good will of the people of India as a whole.

At the St. Thomas' Day celebration in New Delhi on December 18, 1955, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the President of the Republic, observed in his speech:

"In the Constitution we laid down in so many words that all creeds and faiths can be pursued by their followers who will have perfect liberty not only to profess, but also to practice them. It was not an accident that a man like Mahatma Gandhi owed as much to Christianity as to Hinduism . . . Remember, St. Thomas came to India when many of the countries of Europe had not yet become Christian, and so those Indians who trace their Christianity to him have a longer history and a higher ancestry than that of Christians of many of the European countries. And it is really a matter of pride to us that it so happened . . . I can only give the assurance to all those who inhabit this country that we do not expect conformity in faith. What we do want from every individual who happens to be a son or daughter of this country is loyalty - not loyalty to dogma or to any faith - but loyalty to the country. So long as that is there, no one has any reason to be afraid of the Government, of any of its laws, or even of any kind of activity, non-governmental, on the part of an ordinary individual, which would in any way be detrimental to the interest of such loyal persons; and I can also give the assurance that -- in spite of what is now and then heard about missionaries here not being given the same freedom now as they enjoyed before -- there is no intention on the part of any one to curtail their freedom or in any way to hinder their true mission. If their true mission is the preaching of Christianity, placing the life of Christ before our people, they are welcome . . . I am quite sure that everyone who is present here will go back satisfied and assured that we in this country have lived for nearly 2,000 years in peace and harmony, and will continue to do so in the future, too."

Every Indian Catholic will say "Amen" to our chief executive's expression of confidence in the good faith of the Christian community and its missionaries.

2. Obstacles to the Church's Progress

INDIA'S outlook on national and international affairs is colored not only by a determination to be sovereign master of its own destiny but also by a reaction to its long history as a subjugated nation. Both these aspects have given rise to many complications and difficulties in domestic and external relations. Let us glance back hurriedly over the history of modern India, especially as it touches upon Christianity.

CHRISTIANITY AND WESTERN COLONIZERS, 1498 - 1751

India came into contact with modern European civilization through the Portuguese, who arrived at its shores in 1498, and began occupying the trading posts of the country. The Dutch followed soon afterwards. In 1600, the East India Company was established in England to promote trade and colonization, and its representatives soon assumed a major role in the future of our country. France made settlements along the southern and northeastern coast, and a European struggle for mastery of all India was soon in full tilt. The efforts of Robert Clive finally turned the tide in favor of England in 1751, and a large part of our country came under British rule.

The European colonizers did not introduce India to Christianity. The religion of Christ had spread to the southwest coast of our land even during apostolic times. But the Christian groups founded by St. Thomas the Apostle and other early missionaries were cut off from Rome for long periods. Their Christianity was limited mainly to the southwest coast. It was not expansive, and few converts were made in other parts of the country. It is estimated that Catholics in all India numbered only 20,000 in 1490.

The coming of the Portuguese and other Europeans gave a new dynamic impulse to Christianity in India. Unfortunately, the spread of the Christian faith to regions other than the southwest was associated -- in the eyes of

many Indians -- with Western colonialism. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, missionaries came to India with the permission and sometimes with the support of the colonial powers. They built mission schools for the instruction of converts and of non-Christian children, and were the main disseminators of Western culture. Despite the missionaries' advancement of education, they were identified by the Indians with the foreign masters who ruled India and exploited its resources. In the areas under Portuguese control, converts to Catholicism usually adopted the Portuguese way of life; they copied Western manners, dress and food, and even assumed Portuguese names. In some places, converts formed a separate class. They had little contact with the rest of the population, and were thus cut off from the mainstream of Indian national life. By the year 1700, Catholics in India numbered about 800,000 of whom 100,000 were non-Latin rite or St. Thomas Christians.

CHRISTIANITY AND BRITISH RULE

During the two centuries of British rule in India (1751 to 1947), Christianity made remarkable progress. This is all the more noteworthy since the East India Company and British Government, as a matter of policy, were not interested in the spread of Christianity. In 1792, for example, the East India Company received coldly the request of William Wilberforce - Britain's distinguished philanthropist and opponent of slavery - that missionaries and schoolmasters be sent out to India. One of the Company's directors commented that "the Hindus had as good a system of faith and morals as most people, and . . . it would be madness to attempt their conversion or give them any more learning . . . than that which they already possessed."

By a curious coincidence, in that same year one of the most illustrious priests of the Paris Foreign Mission Society, the Abbé Dubois, took up his missionary work in India. For the next thirty-one years Father Dubois lived and labored on Indian soil, at first in the Madras Presidency and later in Mysore State. He was in close contact with high-caste Hindus and has written down much valuable information about the institutions he observed and the customs of the people. The Abbé Dubois formed a most pessimistic picture of Christians in the India of his day. He felt that the "conquest of the country by Europeans was a disastrous event so far as the advance of Christianity in India was concerned." Nevertheless, the Abbé Dubois and his followers continued in their efforts to bring Christian truth to the people of India.

The East India Company long remained adamant in its opposition to the establishment of Christian missions in territories controlled by the Company. This attitude was caused by fears lest the preaching of the Gospel might arouse religious antagonism among the people of India and thus endanger the Company's commercial interest. After 1813, however, there was a slight relaxation in this anti-missionary policy.

When the British Crown took over direct control of Indian affairs after the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857, missionaries of all the Christian bodies were free to enter India. The British Government gave religious freedom to all, and placed no obstacles in the way of Hinduism or the other non-Christian religions. Thanks to the British policy of neutrality in religious matters, Christian missionaries -- both Catholic and Protestant -- won many converts and laid firm foundations to Christianity in the country.

INDIAN ATTITUDES TODAY

Immediately after India attained independence in 1947, there was a noticeable feeling of friendliness among almost all classes of Indians towards Christianity and its missionaries. The foreign missionaries did not leave the country with the British, but remained at their posts and carried on their work with the same zeal as before. They showed in every way complete loyalty towards the Indian Government.

More recently, however, a change has come about. The anti-Christian slogans of bigoted and chauvinistic groups have been echoed by a section of the Indian press, and have influenced the minds of certain segments of the population. As a result, a degree of antagonism towards Christians has developed.

Opposition to Christianity in India is found among adherents of the following powerful movements or ideologies:

(1) **Secularism** - This is a materialistic view of life based on the philosophy of positivism, which seeks to reduce all knowledge to scientific discoveries. It is a vital force among educated Indians, particularly those who have attended universities in the West. Many secularists decry all religion as superstition and wish to substitute for it ideas of a purely humanitarian nature. Such persons are well represented in every phase of Indian life today.

Thanks to secularist influence in the dominant Congress Party, the Government of India has even embarked on a policy of limiting births by artificial means. Catholics, both within and outside the Congress Party, have resolutely attacked the Government's encouragement of birth control. And our efforts in this respect have been supported by some non-Catholics as well. Mohandas Gandhi, India's great liberator, was strongly opposed to birth control which he regarded as a sinful practice. For the Hindu religious tradition which Gandhi embodied springs from the spirit, and respects all life as coming from the Supreme Being. Thus secularism, while strong today, runs counter to the deepest currents of Indian thought.

(2) **Communism** - Proponents of this pernicious doctrine are active in India, as in other countries of Asia. To the poor and downtrodden they hold out the Messianic hope of material gain. They skillfully play upon local

POLITICAL PARTIES IN INDIA

India, the world's largest democracy, has had two general elections since 1947: the first was held in February, 1952; and the second in February, 1957. Seats in the Lower House of the Parliament were divided as follows:

1952		1957	
Congress	363	Congress	366
Communists	27	Communists	29
Socialists	22	Praja-Socialists	18
Splinter Parties and		Scheduled Castes Federation	7
Independents	77	Dissident Socialists	6
		Jan-Sangh	4
		Splinter Parties and	
		Independents	58

Parliament as a whole (that is, the Lower House plus the Council of States, or Upper House) is dominated by Prime Minister Nehru's Congress Party which holds about 1,900 of its 3,000 seats. But the Communists, by skillfully playing on economic difficulties and tensions among different groups, have more than doubled their popular vote since 1952. They now run the state government of Kerala; and they have picked up strength in almost all the State Assemblies, especially in those of Bombay and West Bengal.

prejudices - never absent in a land of many languages and creeds, where caste distinctions give rise to frequent frictions.

Communism, like secularism, is contrary to India's spiritual and mystical background. Nevertheless, it is gaining adherents today. On the national level, the Communist Party is not an important force. It has but 190 representatives in the New Delhi Parliament of almost 3,000 deputies. By contrast, the Congress Party headed by Pandit Nehru has about 1,900 seats (more than 65 percent) in the Parliament. Nevertheless, as a result of the 1957 general elections, the Communists increased their strength in almost all the State Assemblies, especially in Bombay and West Bengal. And in Kerala State, for the first time, Communists have taken over a State Government. This is all the more surprising and disheartening since Kerala State (as we shall

see in Chapter 4) is a Catholic stronghold in India. Communism remains a real threat to the Church, even in a region where Catholics are strongly entrenched.

(3) Militant Hindu nationalism - This movement, with its intense appeal to Indian patriotic and religious feelings, is the most obvious danger at present. It merits our considered attention.

Long before India became free, there were militant Hindu groups at work in the country, carrying on a vigorous campaign against Christianity. Best-known among them is the Hindu Mahasabha (Great Hindu Organization) which advocates the establishment of an exclusively Hindu state. It bitterly opposes conversion from Hinduism to Christianity or other religions. With the support of feudal interests, the Hindu Mahasabha fosters a communal outlook, that is, a narrow, reactionary regime based on Hindu principles. Militant Hindu nationalists have long been strong in the state of Madhya Pradesh in central India. Since 1947, they have gained ground in the north as well. Shrilly proclaiming a message of religious hate and intolerance, they represent a disruptive force in India's body politic.

HINDUSIM - AN ALL-EMBRACING FAITH

The banner and battle-cry of the Hindu Mahasabha is India's ancient religion - Hinduism. Hinduism is, in fact, a formidable obstacle to the wider diffusion of Christianity among Indians. Although divided into many sects, it has a strong hold on the minds and imagination of the people. Despite the absence of fundamental doctrines and an official creed, it is yet well-adapted to meet the needs of the average Indian who enjoys Hindu feasts and the practical aspects of Hindu religion. On the other hand, cultured persons are attracted by Hindu mysticism and philosophy.

Hinduism is, by its very nature, elusive, amorphous and eclectic. It is adaptable to an infinite variety of human characteristics and tendencies. Anyone may be a Hindu who was born in India and accepts some of the beliefs, rites and practices regarded as Hindu. Among Hinduism's main features are: (1) belief in the *Vedas* (the Hindu sacred books) as revealed truth; (2) belief in the law of *Karma*, or the transmigration of souls, as an explanation of the problem of evil and the riddle of life; (3) faith in the attainment of *Mukti* (heaven) after a series of rebirths; and (4) acceptance of the caste system that divides India's people into various classes according to their origin and hereditary occupations.

But the dominating feature of Hinduism is its all-embracing comprehensiveness. On the intellectual plane, it is broadly tolerant, and has an amazing capacity to adjust to changing conditions and to absorb the truths embodied in other religions. For Hinduism sees value in every faith. There

can be no question of inferior or superior creeds. Writing of Hinduism in his book, *Discovery of India*, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru states:

"In its present form, and even in the past, it (Hinduism) embraces many beliefs and practices, from the highest to the lowest, often opposed to or contradicting each other. Its essential spirit seems to be, 'live and let live.' "

The well-known Sanskrit scholar, Baba Govinda Das, describes in his remarkable book, *Hinduism*, the genius of the Hindu tradition through the ages as follows:

"Hinduism is a mass of widely divergent and contradictory teachings of Sanskrit books, all held to be equally orthodox by their special devotees, even though they are utterly irreconcilable with one another."

Thus the idea of a single faith containing objective, absolute and exclusive truth is alien to the average Hindu mind. Just as various paths lead to a mountain-peak and various rivers flow into the same ocean, so Hindus believe that all religions converge on the same goal – the Supreme Being. For this reason, orthodox Hindus resolutely oppose the idea of conversion to Christianity.

THE HINDU MAHASABHA

While Hinduism, by its very existence, hinders the spread of the Christian faith, it should be emphasized that the majority of India's Hindus are neutral towards - or perhaps even unaware of - the Christian minority in their midst. It is the Hindu Mahasabha -- along with associated ultra-nationalist groups such as Jan-Sangh (People's Association) -- that is causing difficulties for the Church today. The Mahasabha was founded in 1928 as a cultural group dedicated to the revival of Hinduism. But it later became an aggressive right-wing political party whose aim is not only the protection of Hindu culture but also the reconversion to Hinduism of all Hindus who have embraced Islam and Christianity. The constitution of the Mahasabha defines as a Hindu "any person who regards this land (India) as his holy land, that is, professes any religion of Bharatiya (Indian) origin, including Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism."

Members of the movement cooperated at times with the Congress Party - the political group dominated by Gandhi and Nehru - in the struggle against the British. But in 1947, the Mahasabha vigorously protested against the Congress Party's acceptance of Pakistan as an independent, sovereign state. Its political goal is the reunion of West and East Pakistan as integral parts of India. It stands for discrimination between Hindus and non-Hindu nationals, and seeks to promote militarism among Hindus. Its constitution

calls for a ban on foreign missionaries, and "naturalization" of the adherents of non-Indian faiths in the country. Wherever possible, members of the Hindu Mahasabha have sought to discredit the activities of Christians, particularly the work of Catholic and Protestant foreign missionaries.

THE MADHYA PRADESH INQUIRY COMMITTEE

One of the most disturbing weapons directed against the Church by extreme Hindu nationalists has been the organization of official inquiry committees. In 1954, the State Government of Madhya Pradesh, in central India, appointed a six-man committee to investigate Christian missionary activities in that State.

The activities of the committee soon gave rise to wide-spread comment in the Indian press. For this reason, the Standing Committee of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, which was in session at Bangalore, addressed a memorandum on June 15, 1954 to the Chief Minister of the Government of Madhya Pradesh. In moderate but firm language, the Catholic Bishops pointed out that five members of the investigating committee were Hindus. The only Christian member, a man who did not believe in the divinity of Christ, had no representative status in the Christian community. Inasmuch as the emphasis of the Madhya Pradesh Inquiry Committee's work was on alleged abuses committed by the missionaries, the Bishops expressed their doubts as to the committee's impartiality.

Undeterred by the Bishops' protest, the Madhya Pradesh Inquiry Committee continued its work in partisan fashion. Its report, which was not published until 1956, created a sensation throughout India. For the committee condemned roundly the efforts of Catholic and Protestant missionaries among the poor and illiterate aboriginal tribesmen of the state's remote rural areas. It accused the missionaries of making conversions to Christianity through costfree lessons, the gift of school books, ploughs, oxen and the loan of money. The converts, it was alleged in the report, became "denaturalized" and strangers to their own country, for the main aim of the missionaries was to create a "Christian Party" or "State within a State." And fear was expressed that one day the Christian community would assert its right to form a separate state as had the Moslems of Pakistan. The report recommended that the Central Government should consider the following steps: ordering the missionaries to leave the country; severely controlling conversions and baptisms; prohibiting by law the use of medical assistance as an instrument of the apostolate; and amending the Constitution so as to limit the right of propagating religion to Indian nationals.

The Madhya Pradesh Inquiry Committee report has done much to embitter relations between India's non-Christian majority and its Christian minority.

Foreign missionaries, as a result, have become suspect in the eyes of many Indians.

THE MADHYA BHARAT INQUIRY COMMITTEE

Similarly, the Government of Madhya Bharat (an area that has recently been incorporated in Madhya Pradesh) formed a separate eight-man committee in 1954 to investigate almost identical charges against the Christian missionaries. The Madhya Bharat Inquiry Committee report, which was also published in 1956, was highly critical of conversions to Christianity among the aboriginal tribesmen and members of the so-called "scheduled classes" (that is, the lowest classes of Hindu society).

The report claimed that such conversions were due mainly to poverty and ignorance among the inhabitants of backward districts. It stated that some conversions had been brought about improperly, and that most of the converts did not understand what Christianity was. The committee condemned the practice of mass conversions, and recommended that future changes of religion be registered with the authorities.

Despite the generally hostile attitude of the committee towards the Church, its members commented favorably on the Catholic nursing home at Indore. "Non-Christian India could imbibe with great advantage," they stated, "the evangelical spirit and the spirit of service shown by the Mothers and Sisters attached to these institutions." Furthermore, the committee declared: "We have no tangible evidence of any anti-national propaganda by missionaries."

Bishop Francis M. Simmons, S.V.D., of Indore, objected to the whole inquiry. He contended that the committee's composition and terms of reference were one-sided; that the procedure was not designed to obtain correct and accurate information; and he flatly refuted the allegation that forcible conversions had taken place. The Bishop pointed out that such methods were strictly forbidden by the Church. He dismissed the argument that illiterate persons were not capable of choosing a new religion.

"The poor and downtrodden," stated the energetic Bishop, "are most in need of religious consolation, and grasp the things of God sincerely and of their own free will. India's Constitution recognizes the common sense of tribal people since it gives them the same right to vote as other citizens. If the poor and illiterate are judged capable of distinguishing among various political parties, why should they not also be able to choose a new religion?"

REACTIONS TO THE COMMITTEES' REPORTS

Members of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Communists quickly seized upon the findings and recommendations of the Madhya Pradesh and Madhya

Bharat Committees to stir up anti-Christian and anti-missionary feelings throughout India. On the other hand, there were fairminded Indians (many of them Hindus) who objected to the distortions in the reports.

On April 12, 1956, the Chief Justice of the High Court of Nagpur, the highest tribunal in Madhya Pradesh, made the following observation on the committee that had been active in his state. He declared:

"In the choice of the personnel of such a committee and the methods adopted, there should be no room for suspicion that it acts in the interest of any one community or section of the community . . . The questionnaire is, indeed, a very long and searching document. Every aspect of Christian life and missionary activity is subject to scrutiny therein. In many places it amounts to an accusation . . . Some of the questions border upon an inquisition, and may well be equated to a 'fishing expedition' on the supposition that something discreditable may be discovered."

In pondering these words, it should be kept in mind that the chairman of the Madhya Pradesh Committee, Mr. Niyogi, is an ex-Chief Justice of the Nagpur High Court.

Speaking to the National Christian Council of India (a Protestant body) at Allahabad on October 13, 1956, Mr. Justice B. R. James of the Allahabad High Court, himself a Protestant, condemned the report of the Madhya Pradesh Committee in these words:

"Some people had the idea that, because the committee was presided over by a retired judge of the Nagpur High Court, it must be a judicial report. The assumption is not justified by the facts. . . . A fundamental principle of judicial process is that the testimony of no witness is accepted without adequate cross-examination, but the committee has preferred the untested evidence of obviously interested individuals. Sentences torn from their context have been pressed into service to support certain theories. . . . How ridiculous to talk of the Church being founded to take part in the Cold War, which has been in existence for not even ten years, whereas missionary activity has been going on for well-nigh 150 years. . . . The tragedy of it all is that there are people who cannot, or will not, understand that there is such a thing as selfless service, and that there are men and women who are prepared to give their all, without expectation of material reward or gain."

In August, 1956, Dr. Hare Krishna Mahatab, Governor of Bombay, addressed a gathering at the Young Men's Christian Association. Commenting on the report of the Madhya Pradesh Committee, the Governor expressed his sorrow over the controversy that document had stirred up all over India. He added:

"It is wrong to conclude that Christian missionaries had exploited unsophisticated and uneducated people. . . . Probably if an inquiry is made to find out how another section (of society) has exploited such people, the result would have been devastating."

In December, 1956, Mr. N. Sanjeeva Reddi, Chief Minister of Andhra

CHRISTIANITY AND THE UNTOUCHABLES

Long ago Hinduism divided Indian society into four big groups or castes: the Brahmins, or priests and scholars; the Kshatriyas, or warriors; the Vaisyas, or businessmen, artisans and farmers; and the Sudras, who are servants of the upper classes. In addition, a fourth group -- the untouchables or "scheduled classes" -- was regarded as the lowest element in society. Its members could not go into the market places or temples, and had to perform the most menial tasks in order to live. It is not surprising that Christianity, with its emphasis on the brotherhood of man, has made many converts among the untouchables.

Mahatma Gandhi called the untouchables Harijan, or "children of God." Under his influence, modern India has abolished all legal restrictions against its 50,000,000 untouchables. Today the Government seeks through subsidies to help members of the "scheduled classes" to improve their lot in life. Unfortunately, narrow-minded persons have sought to exclude from such state aid all untouchables who have become Christians. Thanks to vigorous protests by Catholics and others, however, many Christian converts have begun to receive the state benefits to which they are entitled by reason of their social background.

Christianity's progress among the untouchables is bitterly resented, however, by bigoted Hindus. The anti-missionary inquiry committees of Madhya Pradesh and Bharat Pradesh (which are described in the text) sought to discredit the work of the Christian missions among India's untouchables.

State, took exception to the conclusions of the Madhya Pradesh Committee before a Christian gathering at Hyderabad. The Chief Minister praised the Christian missionaries for their great services to India in education, medical relief and social advancement.

RESTRICTIONS ON FOREIGN MISSIONARIES

The overall effect of the Madhya Pradesh and Madhya Bharat Inquiry Committees has been to create an unfavorable atmosphere for the Church's missions in India. This development may have influenced -- perhaps only indirectly -- the Central Government's willingness to allow Christian foreign missionaries to work in India. Today restrictions on the entry of missionaries from abroad constitute a serious obstacle to our activities.

The shortage of missionary priests is particularly acute in northern India, where few Indian priests are available. Those already stationed in

the area are unable to minister adequately to hereditary Catholics -- let alone begin to reach non-Christians.

Governmental controls over foreign missionaries are not a new thing in India. In 1920, the British first set up a system to regulate the entry into India of Christian missionaries from countries outside the British Commonwealth. The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster was requested by the Government to furnish a list of Catholic religious communities - the so-called "recognized societies" - that were working in India. And for Catholic missionaries from non-Commonwealth nations the Cardinal was asked to act as the "recommending authority."

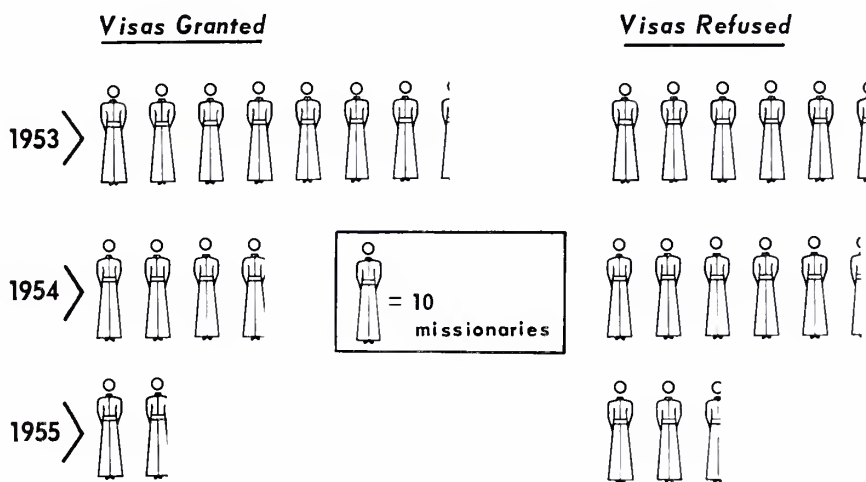
After independence, the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Central Government requested the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India to take over the functions of the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster as "recommending authority." The Government had a list of such missionary societies in their files, and asked that information be furnished about the nature of each society, its sources of income, its members in India and the institutions they conducted. These particulars were collected and handed over personally by the General Secretary of Catholic Bishops' Conference of India to the Ministry of Home Affairs in November, 1949.

In time, the Central Government applied a more rigorous system of control. For the first time, in 1954, missionaries from Commonwealth lands were also required to obtain entry visas. This regulation was later modified so that now they are only required to have special endorsements on their passports. But there is still some discrimination against missionaries *per se*, for lay people from Commonwealth countries -- such as businessmen, representatives of commercial firms, etc. -- are not required to have passport endorsements. The Government has explained that, in its viewpoint, such businessmen are not permanent residents, while the missionaries, who cannot be absorbed into the country, might give rise to political problems if they became too numerous in India.

In April, 1953, the Minister of Home Affairs, in answering a question that had been raised in the Council of States, stated that, while everyone in India was free to propagate his own religion, the Government did not want people from outside to come and do so.

In point of fact, however, the Constitution makes no such distinction between foreigners and nationals in regard to religion. Article 25 (1) states that all *persons* are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion. In his judgment on an appeal against the Bombay Public Trusts Act, Justice Mukherjee of the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court of India declared in March, 1954, that "Article 25 of the Constitution guarantees to *every person and not merely to the citizens of India*, the freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion."

DECREASE IN VISAS FOR CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES TO INDIA



In 1953, the Government of India issued 72 visas to Catholic missionaries, and rejected 53 applications; the next year, 39 visas were granted and 53 refused; and in 1955, only 19 visas were issued and 26 applications turned down. Reasons for the Government's attitude: (1) the growth among all classes of Indians of nationalistic, anti-foreign feelings; and (2) a wave of suspicion against the Christian missions which was raised by bigoted Hindu groups. The Church is seriously handicapped by the shortage of foreign missionaries.

In an effort to clarify the question of visas for foreign missionaries the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India appointed a delegation to wait on the Prime Minister and the Home Minister in March, 1955. Its members were the Cardinal Archbishop of Bombay, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Conference; the Archbishop of Bangalore, General Secretary; and the Archbishops of Delhi-Simla, Hyderabad and Nagpur. The Prime Minister was sympathetic, but pointed out that the problem was political and national, not religious. The Minister of Home Affairs said that we had to depend on ourselves as quickly as possible, and he did not therefore feel happy about our request for a generous supply of foreign missionaries. And thus the matter has remained.

From 1953 to 1955, out of 318 applications for visas for Catholic missionaries sent to the Government of India, 130 were granted and 132 refused. There was a progressive decrease in the authorizations. Thus, in 1953, out of 140 applications, 72 were granted and 53 refused. In 1954, 39 out of 101

applications were granted, and 53 refused. In 1955, 77 applications were submitted, of which 19 were authorized, and 26 were refused. By the end of 1955, 56 applications were still pending.

It is interesting to note that Protestant missionaries are still entering India in considerable numbers, although they also have been affected by the Government's restrictive policy. Many Protestant missionaries came to our country from the United States after 1947. They appear to be well supplied with funds, and represent such groups as the Seventh Day Adventists, the Pentecostal Mission and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Catholic statistics indicate that at least 3,500 priests are Indian nationals out of the 5,400 priests in the country today. Of the nearly 14,000 religious Sisters in India, more than 11,000 are Indians - the result of a great increase in vocations among India's Catholic women.

At present, the Catholic Church in India is trying valiantly to foster as many vocations as possible to the priesthood and various Sisterhoods. This seems to be the only way out of the present dilemma.

3. New Delhi and Religious Tolerance

SINCE independence came in 1947, the Central Government of India has been tolerant, fair and just to the Church. True, we regret deeply the Government's attitude on the entry of foreign missionaries into the country, and hope that there will be a change in policy in this respect. We also have outlined in the preceding chapter two specific cases of unfairness towards the Christian missionaries - the Madhya Pradesh and Madhya Bharat Inquiry Committees. But in assessing these two committees, foreigners should keep in mind the fact that India is a federation like the United States or Switzerland, not a unified country like France or Italy. The discrimination shown in Madhya Pradesh and Madhya Bharat is disturbing. But we must not, on that account, forget the many other occasions when state and local governments have protected Christians. And, as stated above, the Central Government at New Delhi has been all along most fair. Here are a few noteworthy incidents that substantiate the trust India's Catholics place in their authorities.

BETTIAH SCHOOL INCIDENT

In January, 1955, a riot broke out in front of Christ the King High School in Bettiah, a town in northeastern India that lies within the state of Bihar and the Diocese of Patna. The school is an excellent one, and is staffed by American Jesuits. Some months before the riots, the directors of the school learned that some of the non-Catholic students had brought a Hindu image into the school premises and were attempting to perform a secret Hindu religious service there. The directors reported the matter to the police, who ordered the image removed. Unfortunately, some of the students, reinforced by students of other institutions in the area, announced their intention of performing a Hindu ceremony within the school building on January 28, 1955.

The Jesuit Fathers closed the school on January 25th, and requested police protection. Policemen surrounded the school and prohibited the public from gathering within 100 yards. But on January 28th, groups of students - mostly young people from other schools - tried to break through the police cordon. When an unruly crowd gathered, the police dispersed it by force and made some 200 arrests.

Hindu nationalists and Communist agitators joined hands in criticizing the police, the Congress Party Government of Bihar State and the Jesuits. Although, in fact, the police had acted with admirable restraint, the wildest accusations were levelled against them by the local population and in the local press. The American missionaries, who had wisely kept as aloof as possible from the fray, became the targets of such unrestrained abuse that they could not leave their premises for several days. In retrospect, however, it is clear that firm action by the authorities of Bihar put an end to a potentially ugly situation.

VARDHAMAN NAGAR OUTRAGE

In October, 1955, local leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha movement attacked the Catholic church at Vardhaman Nagar, a village in the state of Bihar. Interrupting the sacrifice of the Mass, the insurgents beat up the priest and members of the congregation, threw them bodily out of the church, and proceeded to desecrate the building. The police arrested the responsible parties, who were condemned by a court to prison terms.

Mr. Nehru, India's Prime Minister, later informed Parliament how shocked he had been by this brutal attack on a harmless priest and his flock. He referred to the incident as "a most disgraceful occurrence."

APPRECIATION OF CATHOLIC WELFARE ACTIVITIES

In December, 1954, the Social Welfare Board of the Central Government at New Delhi appointed a Social and Moral Hygiene Advisory Committee to study the problem of immoral traffic in women and children throughout India, and to suggest effective steps to combat this evil. Lady Dhanwanthi Rama Rau, chairman of the committee, and her five assistants toured the country. They visited 86 cities, inspected over 100 institutions and interviewed many magistrates, police officials, social workers and professional people.

Members of the committee were disturbed at what they observed in most of the Hindu and Arya Samaj homes conducted for the rehabilitation of destitute and immoral women. They reported: "These are homes where the basic principles of rescue homes and the correct psychological approach to disturbed persons are not understood in the slightest degree." By contrast,

Catholic institutions at Pondichéry, in what was formerly French India, were praised in these words: "The order of nuns and the Roman Catholic orphanages (both French and local) are doing an excellent piece of work in the rescue and rehabilitation of these unfortunate babies and unmarried mothers."

The committee also inspected the Good Shepherd and Mission Homes at Madras, and two convents run by the Good Shepherd Sisters at Bangalore. Committee members were particularly impressed by the understanding relationship between the Sisters and the inmates. They reported that the Sisters made every effort to keep the young women occupied with appropriate training courses, and treated their charges gently, with the greatest sympathy.

ATTITUDE OF THE HIGH COURT

Although the Constitution of India states that "all persons have the right to propagate religion," the question was raised a few years back in Parliament as to whether this right was applicable to foreign missionaries as well as to citizens of India. In March, 1954, the Supreme Court of India announced in an official decision that the right to propagate one's religion was a fundamental one under the Constitution and belonged to everyone (citizens and non-citizens alike) who enjoyed the protection of India's laws.

ATTITUDE OF PARLIAMENT

In December, 1955, the Parliament at New Delhi met to consider a bill that, if passed, would have seriously handicapped the work of the missionaries. It provided for a strict system of regulating and registering with the authorities all changes of religious faith.

Pandit Nehru made a noteworthy speech which testified to his sense of justice and impartiality in religious matters.

"I fear," he declared, "that this bill . . . will not help very much in suppressing the evil methods, but might very well be the cause of great harassment to a large number of people . . . We should deal with those evils on a different plane, in other ways, not in this way which may give rise to other forms of coercion, and above all, to a feeling among the votaries of the Christian religion . . . and they are very many, as Christianity is one of the most important religions of India established here for nearly two thousand years . . . we must not do anything which gives rise to any feeling of oppression or suppression in the minds of our Christian friends and fellow-countrymen . . ."

The bill was then rejected by an overwhelming majority of Parliament.

Similarly, in September, 1956, a question was raised in Parliament about an alleged increase in anti-Indian activities on the part of Christian foreign missionaries. The Deputy Minister for Home Affairs, Mr. B. N. Datar, gave

the Government's answer in these clear words: "There is no factual basis for the assumption made in the question, according to the information available with the Government of India." Therefore, Mr. Datar stated that no steps were being taken to check the work of the foreign missionaries.

STATEMENTS OF THE PRIME MINISTER

On other occasions, Mr. Nehru has not hesitated to speak out against the anti-Christian position of extreme Hindu nationalist groups. On August 9, 1954, for example, he criticized the Hindu Mahasabha to Congress Party leaders of the various states in these words:

"The tendency in some parts of India to adopt an aggressive attitude towards Christian missionaries is to be deplored . . . It encourages a narrow and bigoted approach to a problem which should be dealt with calmly at the national level." He urged Congress Party members to bear in mind that "minority religious communities in India, such as Moslems, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis, Buddhists, Jains, Jews, etc., are as much a part of India as anyone else . . ."

Again, speaking on April 9, 1956 to a crowd of more than 50,000 at Hubli, Mr. Nehru said:

"We have blamed the Moslem League for communalism (extreme nationalism). Now the League is finished in India. But then we have instead the Hindu Mahasabha . . . The cry for Hindu Bastra (an all-Hindu state) is out-of-date. What they (members of the Hindu Mahasabha) are crying for is to take the country back to strife, misery, and slavery . . . The Hindu Mahasabha is trying to undermine national unity and bring about disruption among the various communities in the country."

CHRISTIAN PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

Christians, sharing in the political life of the nation, have frequently supported the Congress Party at the polls. A number of Catholics have run for office on the Congress Party ticket; others have been associated with the Praja-Socialist Party, a democratic party whose position is similar to that of the British Labour Party.

In the 1957 general elections, twenty-one Christians were returned to the Kerala State Assembly. Fourteen of them were Catholics who stood on the Congress Party list; another Catholic was supported by the Praja-Socialist Party; and the remaining six Christians were non-Catholics.

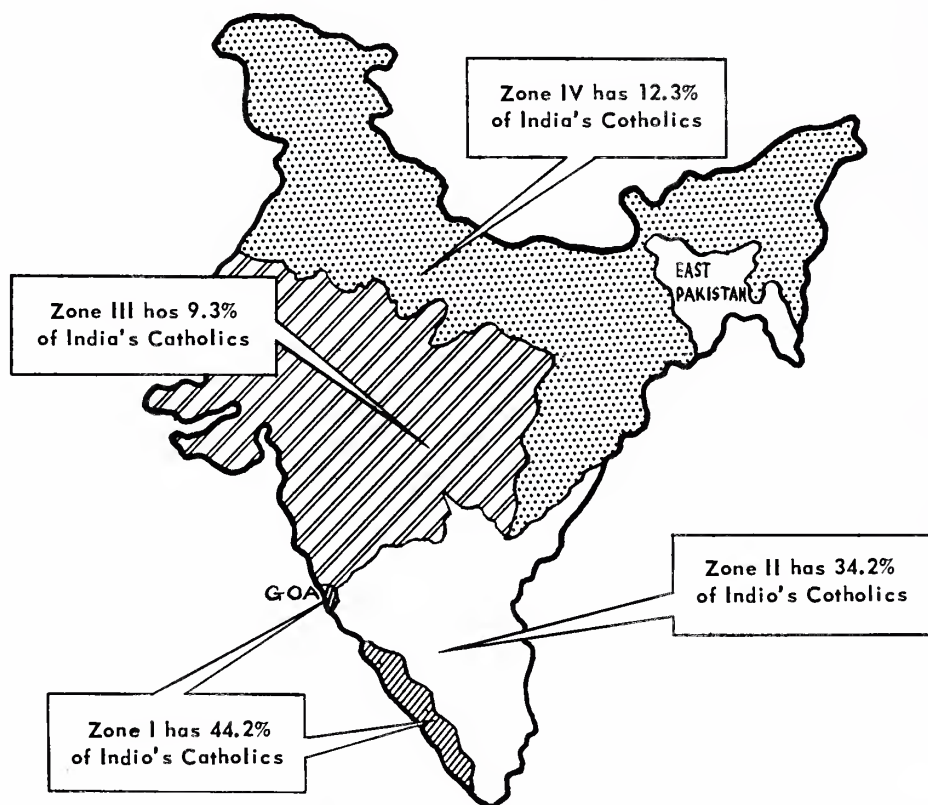
In the same election, four Catholics and five Protestants won with the Congress Party ticket in Madras State. One of the Catholics, Mrs. Louramma Simon, was appointed State Minister for Local Administration and Fisheries. She is a former teacher in a Catholic school, and was for three years head of the Legion of Mary in Kottar Diocese.

The people of Andhra State selected two Catholics for its Assembly in the 1957 elections. In Mysore State a Catholic was returned on the Congress Party ticket, while another Catholic won out as an Independent. The Deputy Minister for Education in Mysore is a Protestant Christian.

Meanwhile, the Congress Party, true to the tolerant principles of its top leaders, has entrusted responsible positions to Christians. Two Protestants are members of the Central Government's cabinet: Miss Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Minister of Health; and Mr. John Matthai, Minister of Finance. The former Governor of Bombay, Raja Sir Maharaja Singh, is a Protestant; and the late Mr. H. C. Mukerjee, Governor of West Bengal, was also a Protestant. Recently, Mr. A. J. John, a devout Catholic and former Chief Minister of Kerala State, was appointed Governor of Madras.

Such appointments as these do not usually receive headlines in the secular press of India and other countries. Unlike the sensational news of the Madhya Pradesh Inquiry Committee, they pass almost unnoticed. Yet, in their own way, they signify both India's political maturity and the extent to which India's Christians are trusted and respected by their fellow-men.

WHERE INDIA'S CATHOLICS LIVE



Catholics are unevenly distributed among the four zones of India considered in this booklet. Zone I (which consists of much of the old Malabar Coast area, including Kerala State and Portuguese Goa) has roughly 44.2 percent of India's Catholics. Zone II -- Madras and south-eastern India -- has 34.2 percent. Zone III -- Bombay and central India -- has 9.3 percent. Zone IV -- the Ganges country and northern India -- has 12.3 percent. The differences are even more marked when we realize that Kerala and Goa have together a population of less than 14,000,000, of whom about 2,300,000 are Catholics. By way of contrast, Zone IV has only 645,000 Catholics in a population of some 200,000,000 people.

The reasons for the above differences are largely historical. Christianity was brought to southern India by St. Thomas the Apostle as early as the first century A.D. Since the arrival of the Portuguese missionaries in the late fifteenth century, most of the south has been open to the Christian missions. Northern India, however, has been a hard terrain for the missionaries because it was more remote from centers of Christian influence. Its inhabitants have also remained deeply attached to Hinduism or Islam.

4. The Malabar Coast

—A Catholic Stronghold

INDIA consists of fourteen main political units or states. Their boundaries were redrawn along linguistic lines in December, 1956. From the viewpoint of the Church's administration, the country is further split into fifteen archdioceses, forty-seven dioceses and seven prefectures apostolic. But such frequent divisions, even of a large area like India, are meaningless to outside observers. Therefore, in considering the Church in India, we propose to look at four large zones: (I) the Malabar Coast in the southwest; (II) Madras and the southeast; (III) Bombay and central India; and (IV) the Ganges country and the north.

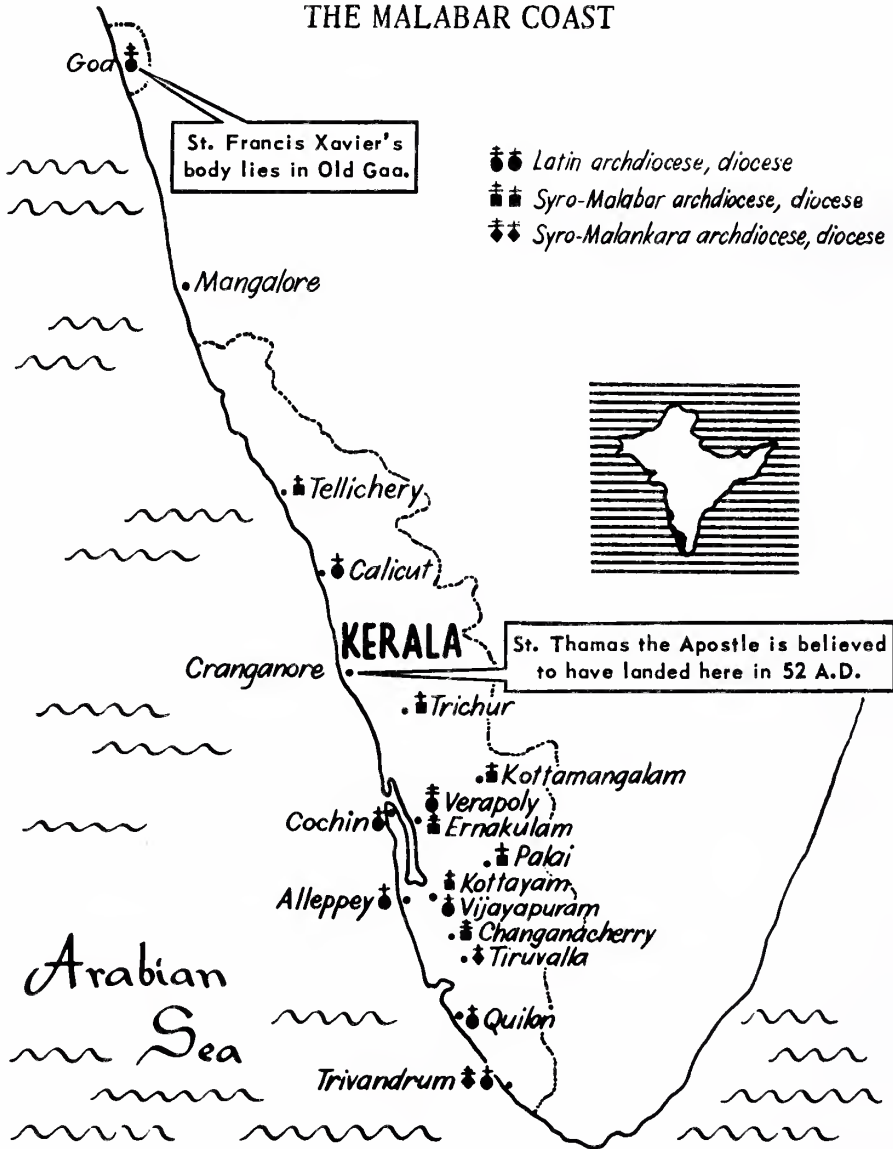
A TROPICAL BEAUTY-SPOT

Our trip around India begins on the narrow Malabar Coast, which stretches southward from Goa between the Arabian Sea and an abruptly rising chain of highlands, the Western Ghats. It is a picturesque tropical region, famous for the production of cashew nuts, coconuts, sandalwood and tasty spices - pepper, cinnamon and ginger. Inland in Kerala State, coffee, tea, and rubber are grown on large plantations. The Malabar ports with their exotic names - Mangalore, Calicut, Cochin, Alleppey and Quilon - have been busy trading centers for centuries.

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE

Christianity was first established in India on the Malabar Coast almost two thousand years ago. In the first century A.D., merchants of the Roman Empire regularly set sail from the ports of Egypt, down the Red and Arabian Seas to Malabar, where they exchanged Roman gold coins and the products

THE MALABAR COAST



India's beautiful Malabar Coast is rich in Catholic traditions. Most of this historic region is included today under Kerala State, which has almost 2,000,000 Catholics among its 13,500,000 inhabitants. As shown on the map, Kerala is dotted with many archdioceses and dioceses of the Latin, Syro-Malabar, and Syro-Malankara rites.

Portuguese Goa, situated to the north of Kerala and separated from it by an intervening strip of Mysore State, has a population of over 678,000, of whom a little more than 300,000 are Catholics. Goa became an episcopal see in 1534, and its Archbishop has the title "Patriarch of the East Indies."

of the Mediterranean world for Indian textiles, pearls, spices and Chinese silks. St. Thomas, one of our Lord's chosen apostles, may have reached India on such a merchant ship. Or perhaps he came overland, via Mesopotamia and Persia. In any case, the Apostle is said to have preached for a while at Gandhara and Taxila, places in the Punjab region of northern India.

No one knows why St. Thomas gave up his mission work in the Punjab. But most authorities accept the ancient and reliable tradition that he landed at Cranganore, then a thriving Malabar port, in 52 A.D. Here he worked among the Jews and Hindus, and is reported to have founded seven Christian churches throughout southern India. St. Thomas must have had great spiritual appeal and a magnetic personality, for some of his converts were men of authority in Hindu society. In 72 A.D., the saint suffered martyrdom at a spot called St. Thomas' Mount, a few miles south of Madras. He was buried at nearby Mylapore. As early as the third century, St. Thomas' body was removed to Asia Minor, but the original tomb in Mylapore can be seen to this day. Over it a lofty church now stands, to which pilgrims from all over India come each year to pray.

INDIA'S EARLY CHRISTIANS

St. Thomas was successful in planting the Church on Indian soil. Despite persecutions and long isolation from Rome and the rest of the Christian world, his followers - the so-called St. Thomas Christians - have ever since cherished the memory of India's first Christian missionary and martyr.

Few concrete facts are known about the early history of the Church in India. One of the signers of the decrees drawn up by the First Council at Nicea (325 A.D.) was Mar John, who is described as the Bishop of Persia and Greater India.

In 345 A.D., Thomas Cana, a wealthy merchant from Syria, arrived by ship at Cranganore. He was accompanied by a bishop, several priests, some deacons and about 400 Christians. Thomas Cana secured a grant of land from the local rajah, built a town on it for his Christians, and also gathered in other Christians from the surrounding countryside. The King of Kerala, Cheruman Perumal, is reported to have conferred certain privileges and honors - seventy-two in number - on Thomas Cana and his followers. Originally these privileges were recorded on bronze or copper plates. Bishops and archdeacons were given wide powers over all Christians, including the right to impose taxes, levy troops and inflict punishment for crimes. The king reserved to himself, however, the right to execute capital punishment.

During the Middle Ages, contact between the Holy See and the Christians of India became difficult, particularly after the rise of Islam. In 1321, four Franciscans, who came from Europe to India were martyred by Moslems at Thana. In 1330, Pope John XXII consecrated a French Dominican, Jourdain

de Sévérac as Bishop of Quilon, and sent him to establish closer contact between the Holy See and the St. Thomas Christians; but de Sévérac, was also killed later by Moslems.

ARRIVAL OF THE PORTUGUESE

Finally, in 1498, Vasco da Gama, the renowned Portuguese navigator, reached Calicut, on the Malabar Coast, by rounding the continent of Africa. Portuguese missionaries and chaplains were greeted by the Indian Christians as their brothers in the faith. There was, of course, some question as to how much the Nestorian churches of Syria and Persia may have passed on heretical views to the St. Thomas Christians. But India's Christians always repudiated this charge, claiming that they remained sound in their faith despite the infrequent contact with Rome.

Soon all the Portuguese trading posts along the Indian coast from Bombay to Tuticorin were Catholic centers. The Franciscans made many converts along the Pearl Fishery Coast at the southernmost tip of India. By 1534, Goa had become an episcopal see.

QUESTIONS OF CHURCH ORGANIZATION

The Portuguese clergy in India, unfamiliar with the Syrian rite of the St. Thomas Christians, decided to latinize them. As we see it today, this was most unfortunate. In 1599, Alexis de Menezes, Archbishop of Goa, convoked a synod at Diamper. The jurisdiction of the Chaldean Patriarch was abolished, and Portuguese bishops were substituted for those of Mesopotamian origin. The Latin hierarchy remained in charge of the Malabar Catholics until the end of the nineteenth century.

Many St. Thomas Christians resented the attempts of the Latin clergy to impose new customs upon them. They clung to their Chaldean liturgy in the Syrian language, and were unhappy when their former bishops were dismissed and Jesuits from Europe put in charge of many churches. In 1653, a great number of St. Thomas Christians assembled at Coonan Cross near Cochin. Holding fast to the Cross, they swore not to obey the Latin bishops. In this way, the Jacobite schism began in India. Its adherents today, split into several groups, number several hundreds of thousands. But among the Jacobites there has always been a strong tendency to return to Rome - a movement which can be seen today and which, we hope, will one day put an end to the unfortunate division. As early as 1662, eighty-four Jacobite communities submitted to the Holy See. Some were entrusted to the Jesuit Archbishop of Cranganore, others to the Carmelite Vicariate Apostolic of Verapoly. Thus from 1678 to 1886, many Syrian-rite Catholics were administered by Carmelite bishops who wisely authorized retention of the traditional

KERALA'S THREE CATHOLIC RITES

Kerala on the Malabar Coast offers a striking example of the Church's unity -- and diversity. For Kerala's 2,000,000 Catholics are divided into three rites. But all three are in apostolic succession, and all are loyal to the Holy Father in Rome.

Catholics of the Syro-Malabar rite are the most numerous group with 1,205,000 adherents. They claim as their first missionary St. Thomas the Apostle. At one time under the administration of Latin bishops, they have had their own hierarchy since 1923. This rite preserves many ancient customs and a liturgy in Syriac. Today it has two ecclesiastical provinces: Ernakulam and Changanacherry.

Latin-rite Catholics (735,000) trace their origin to the Portuguese missionaries. Their customs are, of course, similar to those of Catholics in America and most European countries. They are administered by the Archdiocese of Verapoly.

Catholics of the Syro-Malankara rite are recent converts from the Jacobite churches that went into schism from Rome in the 17th century. Under the leadership of Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos a small group of Jacobites were united with the Holy See in 1930. Pius XI later established a special rite for them, and so rapidly has the reunion movement grown that its followers are now estimated at between 60,000 and 90,000. This rite uses Malayalam -- the local language -- along with Syriac in its liturgy. Among its unusual features is the practice of conferring Confirmation along with Baptism, and of having five separate Lenten periods (totalling 106 days in all) during the year.

liturgy and many forms of religious devotion unknown to Catholics of the Latin rite. Thanks to the devotion and tact of the Carmelite Fathers, the St. Thomas Christians in their charge remained loyal to the Holy See.

In 1887, Pope Leo XIII revised the whole organization of the Church in India. About 1,197,000 Catholics of the Latin rite were placed under the Sacred College of the Propaganda Fide; 476,000 Latin-rite Catholics remained under the Portuguese Patronage, which was not abolished until 1928; and Catholics of the Syrian rite were given their own separate administration. In 1923, Pius XI re-established the Syro-Malabar hierarchy.

Malabar's Catholics have been happy in recent decades to welcome other separated brothers back into the Church. Two prominent Jacobite prelates, Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos, and many of their followers submitted to the Holy See in 1930. Three years later, Pius XI established for them the Syro-Malankara rite. Mar Ivanios became Archbishop of Trivandrum,

a position he held until his death in 1953. Catholics of the Syro-Malankara rite are authorized to make wide use of the local Malayalam language in their liturgy. They number about 60,000 today.

CATHOLIC STRENGTH

The Malabar Coast is not only the oldest home of the Church in India but also its most advanced and prosperous Catholic community. Politically, most of this historic region is now included in Kerala State. Christians in Kerala number 3,300,000 in a total population of 13,500,000, that is 24.4 percent. (By way of contrast, Christians for all India number but 2.6 percent.) Almost 2,000,000 of Kerala's Christians are Catholics; 1,210,096 belong to the Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara rites; while 735,158 are Latin-rite Catholics. And they are growing in numbers, too, for the total Catholic population of Malabar amounted to but 770,458 in the census of 1920.

The whole area is dotted with Christian churches and institutions, and is blessed with many vocations to the priesthood. It has 1,500 diocesan priests; and 574 members of religious societies, of whom about two thirds are Syrian-rite Carmelites. Sisters number more than 5,000 and are almost all

CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN KERALA

<i>Type of School</i>	<i>Number of Students</i>
16 University Colleges	12,800
200 High Schools	500,000
292 Middle Schools	(in high, middle and
1,031 Elementary Schools	elementary schools)

One of the great achievements of the Church in Kerala is its excellent educational setup which serves over half a million students without discrimination as to social background or creed. Catholics maintain more than half the private schools of the state. In addition, the Protestants, Jacobites and some Hindu groups also have schools of their own. Together, Christian and Hindu schools account for a majority of Kerala's educational organizations. Thanks in large measure to the Church, Kerala's people are 70 percent literate -- a notable record in India, where the nationwide illiteracy rate is between 80 and 85 percent. Yet the new Communist-dominated State Government has embarked on a dangerous policy of subjecting private schools to rigorous state control. Unless halted in time, Communist interference may result in the destruction of Kerala's private school system.

Indian nationals. In fact, Malabar supplies both priests and Sisters to over twenty-five dioceses in other parts of India. The seminary at Alwaye has 450 students; and many Malabar Catholics attend the Papal Seminary at Poona, near Bombay, as well as seminaries conducted by various religious communities in other parts of India.

Catholic education is particularly flourishing in Kerala. There are 12,833 students in 16 Catholic university colleges; in addition, the Church operates and staffs 200 high schools, 292 middle schools and 1,013 elementary schools for almost 500,000 pupils of all creeds. Christians in Kerala State (Catholic and non-Catholics alike) are about 70 percent literate, while the average for non-Christians is about 50 percent. And Kerala has the highest literacy rate for all India.

THE COMMUNIST THREAT

Ironically, communism is nowhere in India more powerful today than in this region of Christian strength. For Catholics constitute more than 50 percent in no less than 10 of Kerala State's 126 electoral districts. Catholics alone amount to between 40 and 50 percent in another 10 districts. Catholics combined with other Christians have a majority in yet an additional 10 districts.

Despite this unique concentration of Christians in India, the Communist Party won 35 percent of the Kerala State popular vote in the 1957 general elections; this gave them 60 out of 126 seats in the local Assembly and the right to form the State Government. The Congress Party, which most Catholics supported, won a larger percentage of the popular vote; because of the complicated electoral system, however, Congressmen gained only 43 seats in the Assembly.

The Communist victory in Kerala not only gave India its only Communist State Government but was also a serious setback for the Church. Father Jerome D'Souza, S.J., an Indian representative at the United Nations, comments on this development as follows:

"Kerala was the one place where the Catholic vote might have made a difference in the outcome, and where, in case of a Congress victory, Catholics might have confidently expected to have two or three Catholic Ministers, men who could influence the religious policy of the Congress Party as a whole. Instead of this, these two million Catholics have to live under a Communist Government, two members of which are former Catholics, men who cannot be expected to be sympathetic to the Church. Moreover, while the majority of the Catholics voted against the Communists, they were divided among themselves, and in some places supported the Praja-Socialists against the Congress. This facilitated the victory of the Communists. Finally there is no doubt that in many circles there is a crisis of faith among the youth, and that some of them voted for the Communists."

CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF COMMUNIST STRENGTH

Kerala is the smallest and most densely populated of India's fourteen states; it is also the one with the highest degree of literacy. Prior to the 1957 elections, its political situation was unstable: there had been six different changes of Government in five years. There was also a serious food shortage, and each year the Government had been forced to import about 700,000 tons of rice. In addition, there was widespread unemployment; thousands of students were faced with no jobs upon graduation from the universities. All these factors added up to a general sense of frustration among the people.

Kerala's Communists worked enthusiastically and loyally for their cause. They showed great flexibility in their policies, and were able to capitalize on widespread popular dissatisfaction with the Congress Party. In Kerala, as in other parts of India, the Communists were careful to avoid offending the religious feelings of the people. Mr. M. S. Nambudripad, Communist Party leader in Kerala, offered these solemn assurances in a speech at Ernakulam in March, 1957:

"The Communist Government will not interfere with the religious and social activities of any community. In this respect, there would be no discrimination among Hindus, Moslems and Christians, or between the various denominations of Hindus and Christians. There will be complete freedom for all religions to have their own form of worship."

Nevertheless, only a few months after taking over Kerala's Government, the Communists have proposed drastic changes in the education system. Under the new Education Bill, private schools would come under strict governmental control with respect to the appointment of teachers, payment of salaries and general administration. If the new Bill is carried out, such private schools may eventually be stifled out of existence.

Since private communities - both Hindu and Christian - maintain the majority of schools in the State, there has been a spirited public outcry, including processions with black flags and well-attended meetings of protest. In July, 1957, seventeen Catholic archbishops and bishops joined with nine bishops of other Christian groups in denouncing the new Bill as "an attempt to infringe the democratic rights of the citizens, to liquidate the private agencies in the field of education and to regiment the educational system on a Communist pattern." And in August, 1957, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India protested formally to Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, Minister for Education for the Central Government of India. It is to be hoped that the Central Government will intervene, in accordance with its powers under the Constitution, to prevent such a flagrant violation of the people's rights. Meanwhile, Kerala's Communists are seeking to rally to the support of their educational program certain anti-Christian elements among the Hindus.

COUNTER-MEASURES BY THE CHURCH

Catholics in Kerala are now organizing to meet the Communist danger. The Malabar Regional Committee for Catholic Social Action has organized diocesan and parish centers where priests and laymen receive special training courses in Catholic principles of social justice. A co-operative housing program has been approved; it proposes to build 10,000 housing units within the next year for poorer members of the community.

At the Alway Seminary, a labor leaders' training course was recently conducted by Father Victor, O.C.D. The course began with a three-day retreat; it then considered such topics as economics; democracy and its opposition to communism; social ethics and Catholic action; welfare work; industrial relations; Church history; and public health. The purpose of this and similar movements is to create young Catholic lay leaders - both men and women - who can disseminate among the people the true teachings of the Church on current social problems. Great stress is given to inculcating the proper spiritual and intellectual background; and this is then followed up with practical training in such topics as improvement of agricultural methods; social work in factories; and the organization of public meetings.

In the past, there has been a certain lack of unity among Catholics who are divided into three separate rites. It is to be hoped now that there will be a general closing of the ranks to meet the Communist challenge. This, of course, does not exclude common action with non-Catholic Christians and religious-minded Hindus to protect Kerala's spiritual way of life.

MALABAR SPIRITUALITY

Malabar Catholics have many outlets for their religious zeal. Included are such organizations as the Apostleship of Prayer; the Society for the Propagation of the Faith; Catholic Action; the Legion of Mary; the Marian Sodality; the St. Vincent de Paul Society; the Social Service League; the Catholic Workers' Association; and the Catholic Youth Organization. All these groups are making noteworthy contributions to the strength of the Church and are increasing Church influence in public life.

In addition, Catholics here have a distinguished record of private devotion. The vigor of their Catholicism is amply shown forth in their frequent attendance at Holy Mass, the devout reception of the sacraments, and, above all, in the large numbers of vocations to the religious life. It is to be hoped that such an excellent spiritual disposition on the part of the people will soon manifest itself also in a practical way - through a decisive checkmate to Communist plans for domination.

GOA, REMNANT OF AN EMPIRE

Goa - a small Portuguese possession on India's west coast - is geo-

graphically, ethnically and historically a part of India. In recent years it has assumed great importance to the people of India, who want Goa to revert to them. For they would like to put an end to the last remnant of foreign colonialism on their soil. Goa's Catholic tradition makes the territory of particular interest to Indian Catholics, many of whom sincerely wish to see Goa rejoin India.

Today the Goa settlement consists of Goa proper and two other tiny pockets - Damao, near Bombay, and the island of Diu. It has a total area of 1,537 square miles (about the size of the state of Rhode Island), and a population of 678,732 of whom 301,387 are Catholics. Goa proper has a fine commercial harbor, through which it exports coconuts, copra, salt and manganese. The surrounding countryside is rather hilly.

ITS GREAT PAST

At one time a fortress of the Hindus, and later of the Moslems, Goa was captured in 1510 by Afonso de Albuquerque, the Portuguese Governor of the East. The city of Old Goa, thanks to its strategic situation, became the stronghold of Portugal's extensive empire in Asia. It knew a brief, but heady, period of wealth and splendor during which magnificent churches and public buildings were built. Here was the center from which Catholic missionary zeal radiated in the sixteenth century to the peoples of Asia; and here, in the beautiful baroque Church of the *Bom Jesu*, rest the bones of the missionary hero, St. Francis Xavier.

But the arrival of Dutch ships in Eastern waters early in the seventeenth century brought about Goa's rapid decline. The suppression of the Jesuit missions in the next century and the expulsion of all religious orders by Portuguese anticlericals in 1835 marked the close of a great era. Many of Old Goa's churches and monasteries fell into decay. Long ago governmental offices and most of the population abandoned Old Goa for nearby Panjim, or New Goa, where the climate is more healthful.

PRESENT DIFFICULTIES

The integration of Goa with India will depend largely on the wishes of the people of Goa themselves. But political freedom in the territory is considerably restricted. While Goan newspapers may circulate in Indian territory, Indian newspapers are not always allowed in Goa. The people of Goa enjoy certain economic advantages under Portugal, for they do not have to pay high customs duties or income and sales taxes. But many Goans -- both at home and in Bombay, where thousands of Goans have settled -- favor union with India.

THE RELIGIOUS QUESTION

Although Portugal claims that Goan Catholics would not enjoy religious freedom under India, this argument is not correct. True, there have been some difficulties for the Church in India, but such incidents are usually local in character. The Government protects its Catholic minority.

Addressing a rally of Goans in Bombay in June, 1956, Mr. Nehru remarked: ". . . Last Christmas, we had a message from His Holiness the Pope, in which he raised his powerful voice against colonialism." The Prime Minister of India described Goa as a "colonial anachronism," and offered assurances that Goa would retain its separate status under India. He promised that there would be no interference with the religion, language or culture of the Goans. The former French colony of Pondichéry has, as a part of India, its own internal autonomy; in similar fashion, Goa would also retain its identity. Mr. Nehru added: "I am not going to compel them (the Goans) to join the Indian Union, but I am confident they will want to join India of their own free will."

In 1956, several hundreds of Goans who agitated for union with India were imprisoned by the Portuguese. Indian citizens, also, who marched into Goa unarmed carrying the Indian flag, were condemned to prison terms. The Standing Committee of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, which met at Bangalore in October, 1956, addressed an appeal to the Holy Father. The Pope was asked to intervene on behalf of all prisoners - Goans and Indians alike - who had acted through love of India and had not been guilty of any crimes of violence. By February, 1957, thirty-three Indians, including some prominent political leaders, were released as a result of this appeal to Pius XII.

It is important to keep one point in mind with respect to Goa. Although diplomatic relations between India and Portugal were severed in 1955 over the Goa question, India has no intention of taking Goa by force.

5. Madras and Southeastern India

AFTER Malabar, the Church in India has its most important center along the Coromandel Coast of southeastern India. This historic region embraces a wide coastal strip running southward from Madras to Cape Comorin between the Bay of Bengal and the highlands of the Eastern Ghats.

MADRAS

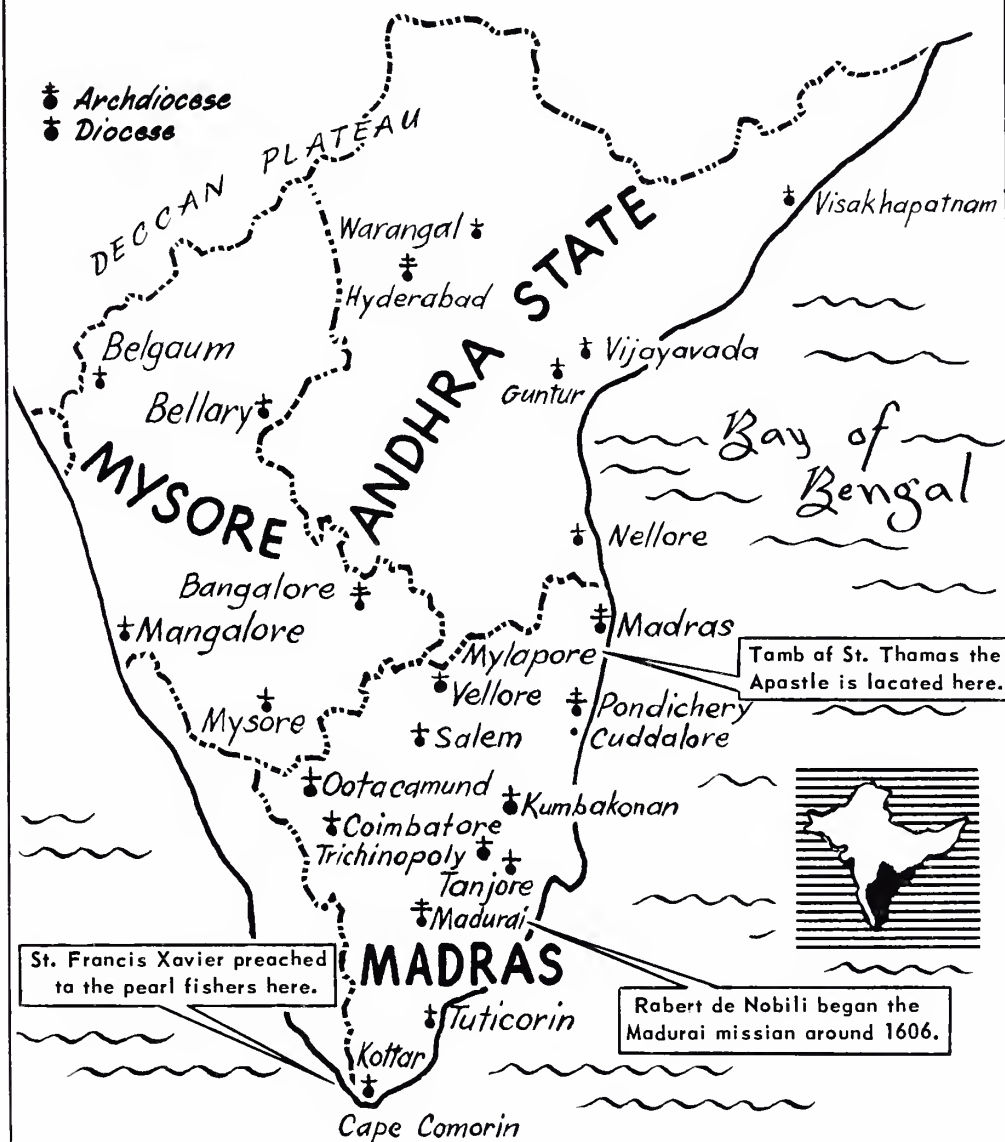
Madras, with 1,416,000 inhabitants, is chief port of the area and India's third largest city. Founded in 1639 as an English trading post on land granted by an Indian prince, Madras is today the most important communications center for southern India. It has an excellent man-made harbor, and is connected with the interior by a network of canals and railroads. Through the port of Madras the products of the hinterland -- cotton, rice, coffee and hides -- reach the markets of the world. It is also a modern industrial city; thousands of workers here are engaged in tanning, the manufacture of leather and cotton-weaving.

Madras is the capital of Madras State. In the recent reorganization of India's political divisions, Madras State emerged with 50,120 square miles, or about the same area as New York State. It has a population of 30,000,000 of whom nearly 1,200,000 are Catholics.

MYSORE AND ANDHRA

The neighboring states of Mysore and Andhra are conveniently grouped with Madras State under the heading "southeastern India." Mysore State consists of 72,730 square miles, and is thus a little larger than the state of North Dakota. Its Catholics number 352,805 in a total population of

MADRAS AND SOUTHEASTERN INDIA



Southeastern India consists of three states, all of which have thriving Catholic minorities. Madras State on the Coromandel Coast (with a total population of 30,000,000) has 1,200,000 Catholics; Mysore (with its 19,000,000 people) has over 350,000 Catholics; and Andhra (with 32,000,000 inhabitants) has around 238,000 Catholics.

19,000,000. Andhra State is by far the largest of the three territories; it contains 110,250 square miles (about the same area as the state of Nevada), but its Catholic community is much smaller - only 238,652 out of a population of 32,000,000. It is worth noting, however, that Andhra's Catholics are increasing rapidly. They numbered but 193,432 in 1950.

CATHOLIC ADMINISTRATION IN THE AREA

Today the Church has divided southeastern India into a great many ecclesiastical provinces. In Madras State, there are no less than three: (1) the Archdiocese of Madras-Mylapore, with Vellore and Coimbatore as suffragans; (2) the Archdiocese of Pondichéry (a former French possession) with Kumbakonam, Salem and Tanjore as suffragans; and (3) the Archdiocese of Madurai, with Tuticorin and Trichinopoly as suffragans.

Mysore State has but one ecclesiastical province: Bangalore, with Mysore, Mangalore, Bellary and the new diocese of Ootacamund as suffragans. Andhra State has also one ecclesiastical province: Hyderabad, with Visakhapatnam, Nellore, Guntur, Vijayavada and Warangal as suffragans.

EARLY CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES

Long ago, St. Thomas the Apostle first brought the message of Christ to the Tamil-speaking people of the area. And about 1500 A.D., the Portuguese conquest of the Coromandel ports gave new impetus to the spread of Christianity. For wherever the Portuguese settled, Catholic chaplains and missionaries began to form Christian communities. Franciscans and Dominicans were the first in the field. Their efforts were soon increased by the arrival of Jesuits, Augustinians, Carmelites, Theatines, Hospitallers of St. John and Oratorians.

THE APOSTLE OF THE INDIES

St. Francis Xavier began his great missionary career in India in 1542. At first, he labored at Goa on the west coast. This Portuguese-held port was noted at the time for the evil lives of its Portuguese and Indian inhabitants. After restoring the Goans to Christ, Xavier went among the Paravas, a low-caste people who lived along the Pearl Fishery Coast. Here, living as the poorest of the poor, he poured the waters of Baptism over countless thousands and purified their souls in Christ. The villagers of inland Travancore also received Xavier with joy. The saint defended the unfortunate Christians of Comorin and Tuticorin who were often massacred or carried into slavery by the anti-Christian Badages from the north. Once, he is said to have held off the invaders, facing them alone with his crucifix in hand. Xavier also

ST. JOHN DE BRITTO PORTUGUESE MARTYR FOR THE FAITH

St. John de Britto (1647-1693) was born in Portugal of noble parents. Out of devotion to St. Francis Xavier, he joined the Society of Jesus at an early age and sailed in 1673 to India, where he was assigned to the Madurai Mission. Father de Britto continued the missionary methods of Robert de Nobili, adopting Indian clothing and customs and -- in so far as consistent with Christian principles -- the rigid rules of caste. He traveled by foot over the difficult roads of southern India, converting a great many Indians to Christ through the example of his austere, holy life. Although in poor health and often attacked by Hindu fanatics, he refused to give up his heroic work. On February 4, 1693, John de Britto was beheaded at Oriurx before a large crowd by order of a local rajah. His name was raised to the altar of the saints in 1947.

defended the Indian Christians from the Portuguese and other Europeans who exploited and oppressed them. In the spring of 1545, St. Francis set sail for Malacca and Japan. His work among the people of India was continued by a series of zealous Jesuits, Augustinians, Franciscans and Theatines.

DE NOBILI - THE JESUIT BRAHMAN

After Xavier, one of the most brilliant Catholic missionaries in India was Robert de Nobili, (1577-1667) an Italian Jesuit. In 1606, Father de Nobili began to work in southern India. He soon noted that only the communities of the Pearl Fishery Coast and Travancore had been drawn to Christ. Conversions to Catholicism were at a complete halt among the Hindus of inland districts, especially among Brahmans or high-class Hindus. This was because most Indian converts were members of the lower classes. The Brahmans regarded the missionaries as contaminated by their contacts with the pariahs or outcastes and despised Christianity as the religion of the *paranguis* or foreigners who ate beef. (For the orthodox Hindus, the cow is a sacred animal).

De Nobili, with the approval of his superiors, had the idea of breaking this deadlock. He learned Tamil and Telegu, the local languages, and Sanskrit, the language in which the sacred Hindu *Vedas* were written. He established himself then at Madurai, a great center of Hindu culture. Dressed in a loin-cloth and seated on a tiger-skin, he fasted and prayed like a Hindu *sannyasi* (holy man). To the Brahmans who visited him in his austere hut,

AN INDIAN BENEDICTINE ASHRAM

*A few years ago two French priests -- Father J. Monchanin, S.A.M., and Dom Henri Le Saux, O.S.B., established a Benedictine ashram (hermitage) in the south Indian Diocese of Tiruchirapalli. Living austere like Hindu sannyasis (monks or holy men) in simple huts, they seek to reconcile the ancient monastic tradition of India with Christian contemplation. Their ashram is called Saccidananda, a Sanskrit term which means being, thought and blessedness. This devout, seemingly revolutionary experiment is in line with the imaginative missionary methods adopted centuries ago by Robert de Nobili and St. John de Britto. It tries to break down Indian prejudices against Catholicism as a "Western religion" by showing that the Church is not tied to any race, nation or culture, but carries a universal message. The spiritual program of the two contemplatives is well explained in their book, *Erémites du Saccidananda*, Tournai and Paris: Casterman, 1956.*

Father de Nobili explained the universality and supernatural character of Christianity in terms drawn from Vedic teachings. And some of the Brahmins believed in Christ.

Gradually, a group of young Jesuits joined de Nobili's Madurai mission. Living simply on rice, milk and herbs, they expanded their activities into the districts of Mysore, Marava, Tanjore and Gingi, where they made some 130,000 converts. Although de Nobili was often attacked in his lifetime by Catholic leaders who did not understand or approve of his daring methods, he is revered today as a great missionary innovator and founder of the "accommodation method."

CONFLICT OF JURISDICTIONS

The seventeenth century saw a slackening in the number of missionaries who came to India from Europe. This was due primarily to the decline of Portuguese power in Asia under the impact of Dutch and British competition. Therefore, the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda Fide sent out to India missionaries independent of Portugal. After 1637, Vicars Apostolic were appointed directly from Rome for several districts. But this resulted in a sharp conflict of jurisdiction between the Vicars Apostolic and the Portuguese clergy in India. The latter claimed the ancient right of clerical patronage (Padroado) which Pope Alexander VI had granted in 1492 to the King of Portugal over all Asian lands discovered, conquered or to be conquered by representatives of the Portuguese Crown. The result was constant rivalry between the areas of India subject to Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda

Fide and those under the Padroado. And the Portuguese Padroado in India lasted until 1928, when a Concordat between Lisbon and the Holy See abolished the system of personal jurisdiction by Portugal. Finally, in 1950, the Padroado was restricted to Goa.

MADRAS UNDER BRITISH RULE

When the British established themselves at Madras in 1639, they found several Catholic churches at the old Portuguese settlement of Mylapore, south of Madras. Some of the Catholics in residence were Portuguese citizens. Others, of mixed Portuguese-Indian origin, had Portuguese names, but were well-acquainted with the language of the Madras area as well, and knew the local customs. Officials of the East India Company soon realized that the Indian Christians would be of great value as interpreters, tradesmen and soldiers. Accordingly, they invited the Christians to move up from Mylapore to the new township, and authorized them to secure the services of a Catholic priest.

In 1642, Father Ephreim, a French Capuchin, set foot in Madras by chance. Although the East India Company was ordinarily opposed to missionaries in its territories, its officials asked Father Ephreim to stay and minister to the local Christians. He obtained the necessary permission from his superiors, and was appointed a Prefect Apostolic. Afterwards Capuchins were in charge of the Madras area for almost 200 years. Under their careful guidance, Madras developed into a flourishing center of Christianity. The gate-posts of the beautiful cathedral at Mylapore bear the date 1642, although the body of the church-building was not erected until 1775.

In 1832, Madras was placed under the episcopal jurisdiction of Pedro D'Alcantra, of the Carmelite Order; he was Vicar Apostolic at Bombay, but was later transferred to Madras. Subsequently, Madras' Catholics were administered by Irish diocesan priests and the Mill Hill Fathers. In 1928, Salesians of Don Bosco arrived.

Today, Madras is divided into twelve ecclesiastical territories, nine of which are entrusted to the Indian secular clergy; two territories, the Diocese of Madurai and the Archdiocese of Madras, are confided to the Jesuits; and one, the Diocese of Vellore, is under the Salesians of Don Bosco. Ten of the twelve bishops are Indians. Priests in the state number 1,086, of whom 882 are Indians and 204 are foreign missionaries. There are two major seminaries, one in Madras and one in Tiruchirapalli. And candidates to the priesthood are numerous, as one might expect in an area with such a fine Catholic tradition.

Madras' Catholics are fortunate in having as their spiritual leader the Most Reverend Louis Mathias, Archbishop of Madras-Mylapore. Through his foresight, a co-operative housing development has been developed in Madras;

it provides neat and healthful homes for the poor at a nominal rental of only fifty cents per month. Madras is also famous for its Catholic Center, and St. Joseph's Technical School - one of the best of its kind in all India - which is conducted by the Salesians of Don Bosco.

MYSORE STATE

Mysore lies inland and to the west of Madras. It has a pleasant, varied landscape, with many hills, forests, and river valleys. Its northernmost district runs up into the Deccan, the great plateau of southern India, which is a cotton-growing area. Bangalore, the capital and largest city of the state, has about 250,000 inhabitants; it is an educational center, and enjoys a healthful climate because of its situation almost 3,000 feet above sea-level.¹

ITS CATHOLIC HISTORY

A stone inscription of the year 1400 A.D. discovered at Anekal, some twenty-five miles from Bangalore, indicates clearly that Christianity was first preached in the Mysore area about that date. But the true founders of the Mysore Mission were Italian and Portuguese Jesuits who began their work here about 1650.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the Jesuits had established a flourishing Christianity. Some eighteen missionaries cared for 30,000 Catholics at Mysore, Salem and Coimbatore. Most of the converts were Hindus of the higher castes. But persecution at the hands of local Moslem rulers dispersed the Christians and closed down their churches. In time, some of the Christians became soldiers in the armies of petty rajahs; some suffered martyrdom for the faith, while others apostatized; and a certain number sought refuge and religious tolerance in the Madras area.

UNDER FRENCH MISSIONARIES

French Jesuits from Pondichery began to preach the Gospel in the Telugu-speaking parts of Mysore State and the nearby districts of Madras State early in the eighteenth century. They achieved remarkable success among Hindus of the lower castes. On the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773, the Jesuits were replaced by priests of the Paris Foreign Mission Society. In fact, the missionaries from Paris were long in charge of extensive Telegu-speaking areas in Mysore, Madras and Andhra States.

One of the most illustrious members of the Paris Foreign Mission Society was the Abbé Dubois (whose activities were previously referred to in Chapter 2). His book, *Hindu Manners and Customs*, is still considered a classic report on Indian society.

¹ Editor's Note: Bangalore is the see city of the author, Archbishop Pothacamury.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES IN MYSORE STATE

<i>Ecclesiastical Unit</i>	<i>No. of Institutes</i>	<i>No. of Inmates</i>	<i>Annual Maintenance Costs (Rupees)</i>	<i>Annual Government Grant (Rupees)</i>
Bangalore	11	1,505	317,712	72,225
Mysore	5	318	51,000	6,810
Mangalore	17	1,240	219,600	51,691
Bellary	2	271	41,784	15,090
Belgaum	3	319	67,140	33,026
Total	38	3,653	697,236	178,842

For decades the Church has conducted orphanages and other charitable institutions in India, setting standards for other social agencies. The above statistics show the extent of Catholic activities in the five ecclesiastical units that are included in Mysore State. While most of the inmates are Catholics, the priests, Brothers and Sisters in charge of the various charities also care for adherents of other creeds in the spirit of Christian love and tolerance.

Another member of the Paris Foreign Mission Society whose great achievements for the faith in India deserve commemoration was Bishop Bonnard. He labored among the Telegu-speaking people from 1836 to 1861. Towards the end of his life, the Bishop was appointed by the Holy See as Visitor Apostolic for India, and in this capacity he traveled to Bombay, Indore, Patna, Hyderabad, Calcutta and Chandernagore. He died at Banaras, in northern India, having been anointed before his death by Bishop Hartmann, a Swiss Capuchin missionary. Bishop Bonnard's tombstone at Banaras bears the inscription: *Pontificum decus, Missionariorum exemplar* which may be rendered in English as: *Eminent among bishops, an exemplar among missionaries*. He has been described as "one of the finest minds of latter-day missionary enterprise."

Bangalore has been the scene of important events in the history of the Church in modern India. On January 25, 1887, Archbishop Agliardi, then the Delegate Apostolic for India, proclaimed here the establishment of the Catholic hierarchy for southern India. From 1919 to 1948, Bangalore was the residence of the Delegates Apostolic. Here, also, have taken place meetings of the Working and Standing Committees of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India. And in January, 1950, the First Plenary Council of the Church in India assembled at Bangalore.

ANDHRA STATE

Andhra lies along the Bay of Bengal, east of Mysore State and north

of Madras. Its inland districts straddle the highlands of the Eastern Ghats and reach well up into the Deccan Plateau. Hyderabad, its most important city, was formerly the capital of the princely state of Hyderabad.

ITS CATHOLIC HISTORY

In the sixteenth century, the Jesuits began to found Christian communities among the Telegu people of Andhra State. By 1733, six missionaries cared for some 10,000 Catholics. Only a few years later, a mass conversion movement was under way among the villagers. Thousands of converts were made, including many upper-caste Hindus. But the suppression of the Society of Jesus, in 1773, dealt a disastrous blow to Catholic missionary enterprise here and in other districts of southern India. The Jesuits were followed by the Irish secular clergy, and later by the Mill Hill Fathers. On the Deccan Plateau, the Bishops of Hyderabad were until 1953 members of the Milan Foreign Mission Society. [Missionary Society of SS. Peter and Paul].

Today the state is divided into six ecclesiastical territories: the Archdiocese of Hyderabad and the Diocese of Guntur, which are entrusted to the Indian secular clergy; the Diocese of Nellore, which is administered by the Mill Hill Fathers; the Dioceses of Vijayavada and Warangal, where we find the Missionary Society of SS. Peter and Paul in charge; and the Diocese of Visakhapatnam, which is under the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales.

THE CLERGY

Among the five Archbishops and nineteen Bishops in South India, three

LEGION OF MARY IN SOUTHERN INDIA

<i>Number of Praesidia</i>	<i>Senior</i> 307	<i>Junior</i> 158	
<i>Number of Members</i>	<i>Senior</i> 3,719	<i>Junior</i> 2,451	<i>Auxiliaries</i> 12,818

One of the most fruitful forms of the lay apostolate in southern India is the Legion of Mary. Its members are active in many parishes, where they do untold good for their fellow Catholics and the whole Indian community. By carrying Christian principles into the market place, the Legionaries help to counteract communism and other anti-religious influences. Through close contacts with non-Catholics, they are often able to remove prejudices against the Faith and to spread among Indians of all classes a correct understanding of Catholic aims and teachings.

Archbishops and thirteen Bishops are sons of the soil, including the Auxiliary of Madras-Mylapore. Eleven out of the twenty-three dioceses in southern India have been erected since 1929. Priests number 1,702, over 68 percent of whom are Indians. Sisters are 6,081, about 80 percent of whom are Indians. There are 3,381 lay catechists.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

In southeastern India there are today ten University Colleges for men, and eleven for women, with a strength of 8,556 boys and 2,927 girls, the great majority of whom are non-Christians. In 179 Catholic high schools, over 100,716 children are educated. Some 153,648 children, of whom 89,182 are girls, receive the benefits of a sound Christian education in 1,919 elementary schools. Most of these children are Catholic. This vast and creditable educational system employs about 10,600 Catholic lay teachers.

Thanks to our educational institutions that dot the southeastern coast, Catholics have been placed on a level of equality with the best of their environment. The wall of prejudice against the Catholic faith has broken down and great efforts made to leaven indirectly the minds of non-Christian youth with a knowledge of the great truths underlying human existence and the purpose of life. It is through the channel of higher education that the Church has opportunities to establish contacts with Indians of the higher classes.

CATHOLICISM IN THE SOUTHEAST

If we survey Catholicism in the whole southeast of India (that is, including Madras, Mysore and Andhra States), it is clear that the Church's development in recent years has been most favorable. One of the factors which has contributed to the growth of the Church in this region is the progressive policy laid out by Edward Cardinal Mooney, who was Delegate Apostolic to India from 1926 to 1931. His Eminence began to split up large and unwieldy dioceses into smaller, more manageable units. In addition, there has been a great increase and expansion in Catholic institutions of learning and charity. Such institutions not only improve the spiritual, social and intellectual standards of Catholics but serve also as links to our non-Catholic fellow-citizens.

CATHOLIC ORGANIZATIONS

Catholic laymen have been awakened to a sense of their responsibilities by the recently established Catholic Action movement, which aims at the

defence and promotion of our religious and cultural rights and a wider propagation of the Catholic name. It is firmly rooted in Madras State, especially in Madurai and Madras-Mylapore Archdioceses.

There are numerous other Catholic Action organizations: the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary; the Students' Missionary League; the Society of St. Vincent de Paul; Catholic Youth Movement; Young Workers' Association; and the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament.

One of the most extensive and fruitful branches of Catholic apostolate is the Legion of Mary. There are 307 senior and 158 junior praesidia in South India, with 3,719 senior and 2,451 junior members. The total number of Auxiliaries is 12,818. By house-to-house visitation of families, sick persons (both Catholic and non-Catholic), hospitals and dispensaries, the Legionaries have shown that the Catholic religion is one of love and service. Members of the Legion of Mary have also brought credit to themselves by reconciling domestic quarrels in Catholic families; by regularizing marriages performed outside the Church; by bringing Catholic children to Catholic schools; by rescuing women in moral danger; and by maintaining bookstalls for the dissemination of Catholic literature. In addition, the Legionaries have certainly brought knowledge of our faith to thousands of non-Catholics.

OUTLOOK FOR THE CHURCH

In general, the Church's position in southeastern India is good. Catholics are well integrated with the surrounding community, and enjoy friendly relations with their countrymen of other creeds. Because the Church is long established in some districts, the Hindus are more tolerant of Catholics here than in places where there is no Catholic tradition. But the average Hindu still looks with suspicion on converts to the Church. As a rule, Catholics are accepted as patriotic Indians who contribute their share to the nation's growth and social advancement. When Madras State recently removed social and educational disabilities imposed upon members of the so-called "depressed classes," Christians of the lower classes benefited along with the Hindus.

Most of southeastern India's Catholics live in country districts, and many of them are poor in material possessions. But they have a well-developed sense of moral and social responsibility. Thanks to the Church's teachings, they realize their dignity as children of God in Whose eye the poor and humble of this world are no less than the rich and powerful.

Catholics take an active interest in public affairs, and are quick to defend their rights and liberties. Many Catholic laymen hold high positions in Madras and Mysore States; in Andhra, this is not the case. For Catholics in Andhra are outnumbered by 1,000,000 Protestant Christians, who are one of the best educated and most progressive elements in the state. On the

other hand, there is no discrimination against Catholics in Andhra. Its Chief Minister, Mr. N. Sanjeevi Reddy, recently made the following statement:

"I am assuring the minorities in Andhra Pradesh that there will be no obstacles in their advancement. Everyone will enjoy all the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution. The administration must go on without distinction of caste, religion, race or language. This is the ideal I am placing before the government officers."

Finally, communism is not such a problem here as on the Malabar Coast. While Communists are active in some districts, they do not have a large following as in Kerala State, and our Catholic people have been generally free from communism's irreligious and materialistic influences.

6. Bombay and Central India

BOMBAY is the traditional gateway to India. Situated on a coastal island in the Arabian Sea, it is connected by a causeway to the mainland. An immense and cosmopolitan city, Greater Bombay has today a population of 3,000,000 people. It is India's largest urban unit and greatest seaport. Through its modern harbor passes most of India's commerce with the West. Bombay is also the center of India's cotton industry, and is noted for its railroad shops and tanneries. Visitors to Bombay can admire such Western-style features as impressive public buildings, modern apartment houses and department stores, wide boulevards and beautiful parks. But near at hand they will also find picturesque old quarters in the Indian tradition. Here bazaars, or market places, are colorful with tropical fruits and flowers; and merchants in countless tiny shops offer for sale brassware, jewelry and other fine examples of Indian handicraft.

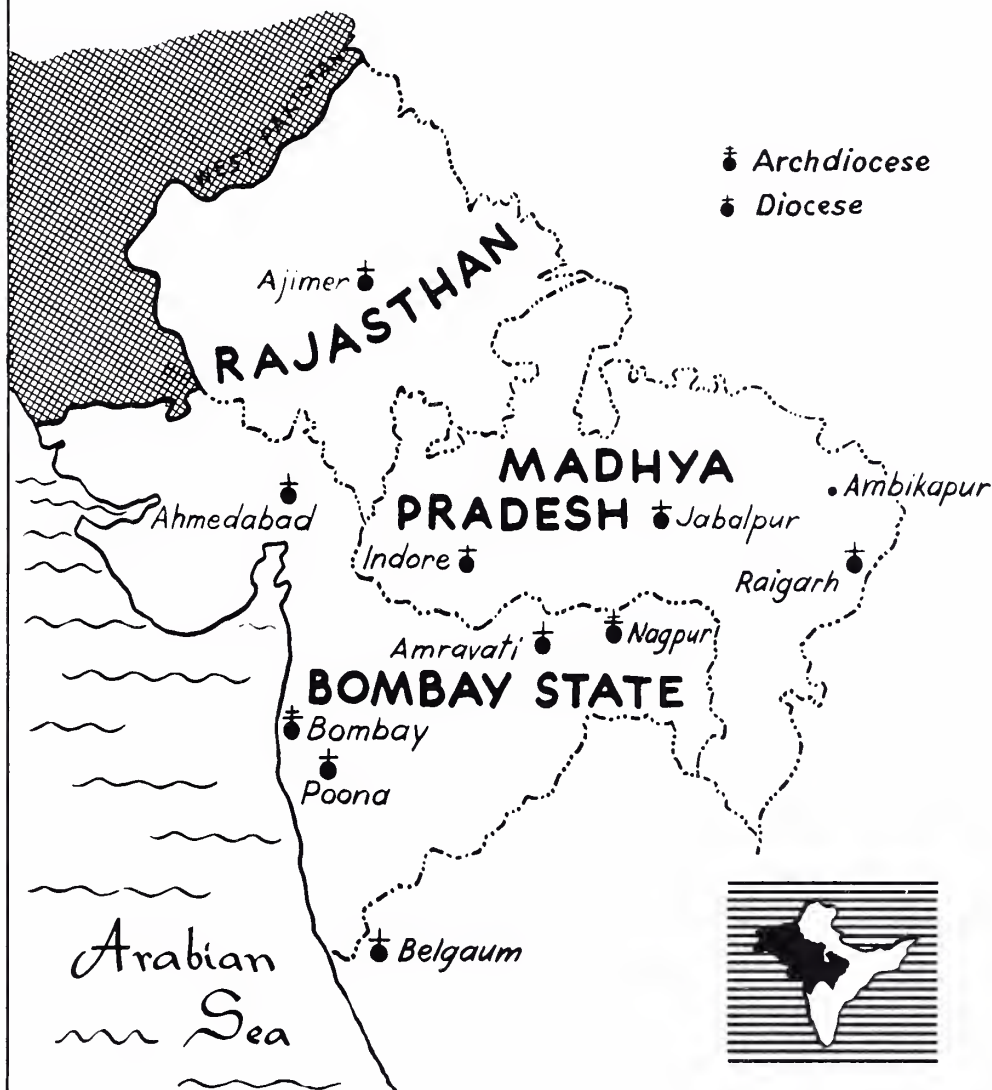
BOMBAY'S HINTERLAND

The City of Bombay serves as an outlet for three huge and populous inland districts -- Bombay State, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

Bombay State, the largest territorial unit in India, covers 188,240 square miles or the area equal to Nebraska and Nevada combined. After independence, it was increased in size by the merger of several other states. Despite mountainous terrain in some parts (the Western Ghat Highlands run through the state), its climate is rather hot, averaging about 80 degrees Fahrenheit. The majority of its 47,800,000 people work on farms, where they raise cotton, rice, wheat and millet.

Rajasthan lies north of Bombay State and borders on the Republic of Pakistan. Its area of 132,300 square miles makes it somewhat larger than

BOMBAY AND CENTRAL INDIA



Central India, consisting of the states of Bombay, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, is dominated by the great port-city, Bombay. Here the Church has struck deep roots, and in 1953 Bombay's Archbishop was picked by the Holy See to be India's first Cardinal. There are almost 400,000 Catholics in Bombay State (out of a population of 47,800,000). Rajasthan (with 16,000,000 inhabitants) has a tiny Catholic minority of less than 8,000. Madhya Pradesh – the site a few years back of an anti-missionary inquiry committee – numbers around 100,000 Catholics among its 26,100,000 people.

New Mexico. Part of Rajasthan is desert country. Its total population is 16,000,000.

Madhya Pradesh embraces much of central India. Some 26,100,000 people live here in an area (171,200 square miles) more than twice the size of the state of Minnesota. In remote districts of Madhya Pradesh are found primitive tribes which are slowly coming under the religious influence of Hindu and Christian missionaries. Hindu nationalist groups in the State have unfairly attacked the activities of Christian missionaries, as was mentioned in Chapter 2.

SITUATION OF THE CHURCH

Over the vast area of these three states are found 488,082 Catholics, of whom 242,150 live in the Archdiocese of Bombay. Bombay has as suffragans the Dioceses of Poona, Ahmedabad and Belgaum (the latter now a part of Mysore State). The Metropolitan See of Nagpur, now in the Bombay State, has three suffragans: Amravati, Raigarh-Ambikapur and Jabalpur (the latter two in Madhya Pradesh). Indore in Madhya Pradesh and Ajmer, the only ecclesiastical unit in Rajasthan, are suffragans of Agra.

Bombay is the most important ecclesiastical unit of India today for many reasons. It contains a large, prosperous Catholic community, and a wealth of educational and charitable institutions. Its spiritual leader, Valerian Cardinal Gracias, is India's first Cardinal. Let us, therefore, take a brief look at Bombay's stimulating Catholic history.

BOMBAY'S EARLY MISSIONARIES

In the fourteenth century, the Bombay area was evangelized by Jourdain de Sévérac, the Dominican Bishop of Quilon. But it is a matter of conjecture how many conversions were made at that time. In 1534, Franciscan and Dominican missionaries from Goa began to preach here with considerable success. Before long, the island on which Bombay lies had a thriving Catholic community and many churches and monasteries. From 1534 to 1650, the early missionaries were aided by members of other religious communities: Jesuits, Augustinians and the Hospitallers of St. John of God.

In 1661, Bombay was ceded to England by the Portuguese Crown as part of the dowry that Catherine of Braganza brought to Charles II. Shortly afterward, the English East India Company established itself in Bombay. The work of the Catholic Church was continued here by Indian secular priests and Portuguese missionaries from Goa.

When the Goan clergy were expelled by the British for political reasons in 1720, Bombay passed under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Vicar Apostolic of the Great Mogul at Agra. Carmelite priests were delegated to

STATISTICS OF THE BOMBAY ARCHDIOCESE		
Ecclesiastical Units	Districts 12	Parishes and Quasi-Parishes 84
Catholic Education	University Colleges 2 (3,329 students)	High Schools 45 (47,849 students)
	Middle Schools 8 (3,799 students)	Elementary Schools 81 (15,537 students)
Clergy and Sisters	Priests 349 (153)*	Sisters 393 (212)*
Number of Catholics	242,150	

* Figures in parentheses indicate priests and Sisters of Indian nationality.

The Archdiocese of Bombay with its large, well-established Catholic community and many institutions of learning is an important center of Indian Catholicism. In 1953, the Holy See for the first time in history conferred the rank of Cardinal on an Indian national -- Valerian Cardinal Gracias, Archbishop of Bombay.

look after the spiritual needs of the Bombayans, and remained at Bombay until 1850. During the eighteenth century, a race of conquerors - the Maharas or Marathas - invaded the Bombay area and destroyed many of the Christian churches. But the Catholic community in Bombay soon recovered from this blow, and grew stronger with each decade. In 1866, the Bombay Vicariate was raised to the status of an Archdiocese.

CATHOLIC STRENGTH IN BOMBAY

The Archdiocese of Bombay contains today twelve ecclesiastical districts, eighty-four, parishes and quasi-parishes, and 349 priests, of whom 196 are foreign missionaries. Sisters number 393, of whom 212 are Indian citizens. The Archdiocese maintains forty-five Catholic high schools for some 47,849 pupils; eight middle schools for 3,799 students; and eighty-one elementary schools in which 15,537 children -- most of them Catholics -- are trained according to Christian principles.

Each year Bombay contributes one third of the total amount collected in all India for the Propagation of the Faith. Vocations to the priesthood are plentiful, and Bombay's major seminary has now over a hundred students. The Archdiocese has also a strong Catholic Action movement, which includes 329 sodalities and 100 Praesidia of the Legion of Mary.

Socially and educationally, Catholics occupy a conspicuous place in Bombay life. They are generally esteemed for their good character, public spirit and their noteworthy contribution to India's moral and material progress. In recent years, three Catholics have occupied the eminent position of Mayor of Bombay. There are, in addition, solid Catholic communities in nearby Salsette and Bassein.

Sophia College, established about fifteen years ago by the Religious of the Sacred Heart, is one of the finest institutions for the education of women in all India. St. Xavier's College in Bombay is nearly a century old, and has trained generations of young men in the humanities and technical knowledge. Its graduates occupy prominent places in public service, business and the professions.

The flourishing condition of this great Archdiocese gives promise of a rich and golden harvest in the years to come.

INDIA'S FIRST CARDINAL

All India rejoiced in 1953, when the Archbishop of Bombay was elevated to the dignity of a Cardinal in the Holy Roman Church. His Eminence Valerian Cardinal Gracias is the first son of India to receive such a tribute. This important event was most welcome to the people of India and to high circles in the Government. For it showed the strength and vigor of Catholicism in our ancient land, and redounded to India's prestige among the nations of the world.

Over 70,000, Bombayans - Catholics and non-Catholics alike - attended a public reception given to His Eminence in February, 1953. Thus Bombay showed its pride in the honor conferred by the Holy See on Cardinal Gracias. The Governor of Bombay expressed the feelings of the vast crowd in these words:

"The joy and pride which you justifiably feel today are, I am sure, shared by the whole country. The honor which has been conferred on Cardinal Gracias and India in no small way reflects the recognition of our still young, but great Republic by the outside world."

And the Mayor of Bombay had these words of praise for his distinguished fellow citizen:

"We should like to think - and Your Eminence, we know, will share our feeling - that this distinction has more than individual significance. It is surely no mere coincidence that the first Chinese Cardinal should have been named when China had attained her nationhood, and the first Indian Cardinal should be appointed soon after India has secured her due place among the free nations of the world. This, we claim, is an honor to both India and Bombay."

NATIONAL MARIAN CONGRESS OF 1954

One of the most glorious landmarks in the history of the Church in Bom-

bay was the National Marian Congress, which took place here from December 4th to December 8th, 1954 to mark the closing of the Marian Year.

His Eminence Cardinal Gracias was appointed a Papal Legate for the occasion. The Apostolic Internuncio, His Excellency the Most Reverend Martin Hubert Lucas, S.V.D., was in attendance, as well as the Most Reverend Archbishop Leo Peter Kierkels, C.P., the former Internuncio. There was a distinguished Catholic gathering from India and abroad, including the Greek Catholic Archbishop of Baalbek, in Lebanon, the Archbishop of Malacca and the Bishop of Rangoon. Some seventy-five other prelates, 800 priests and seminarians, and 100,000 lay persons passed in solemn procession through the city streets.

At the inauguration of the Congress India's Vice President, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, spoke these words in praise of religion as a force for inward renewal:

"Unless - in Jesus' words - we repent, unless we are reborn, unless we are renewed in our consciousness, unless we become as a little child, responsible to the magic and mystery of the world, we cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

He spoke respectfully of a private audience he had had with Pius XII, and referred to the Holy Father's "purity of life and penetration of mind." The Vice President then quoted the Holy Father's prayer for peace on the occasion of the 1950 Holy Year and praised the Supreme Pontiff for his tireless efforts to promote harmony among all peoples of the earth.

The Congress was marked by scenes of unprecedented splendor and enthusiasm. Tens of thousands of non-Catholics lined the streets of the city to watch the impressive religious procession. One of the main features was a Marian Pageant of seventeen floats depicting scenes in the life of Our Lady. All the ceremonies went off smoothly, and the onlookers maintained an attitude of respectful silence and admiration.

POONA - A GROWING CATHOLIC CENTER

Inland and to the southeast of Bombay lies Poona, an important center of the Faith.

Poona City is now the training ground for the formation of an elite among the clergy. The De Nobili College of the Society of Jesus, established some twenty years ago, has an enrollment of 250 students. The Papal Seminary of Kandy, Ceylon, (established for the Indian secular clergy in 1893) was moved to Poona in 1954. It has an enrollment of 150 students.

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL ORDER

Poona's Indian Institute of Social Order was established by Jesuit educationists and social workers with a three-fold program: to disseminate

social doctrine; to train social workers; and to organize or participate in social conferences. The Institute is intended not only for Catholics but also for other groups. With a Christian background the Institute aims to interpret the Gandhian ideals of social justice and the Indian Constitution, much of which is in keeping with Christian doctrine.

Since April, 1951, the Institute has issued a monthly publication, *Social Action*, as well as books and pamphlets on topics of current Catholic interest. Among its popular publications are: (1) *Citizens and the World* by Fr. A. Fonseca, S.J., which has been approved by the Bombay Government and by the Central Ministry of Defence for use as a textbook; and (2) Fr. Nevett's *Is India Going Red?* Two editions of this pamphlet, about 7,000 copies, sold out in record time.

The work of the Institute has been recommended by the President of India, the Prime Minister and the Central Ministers for Education and for Health.

POONA'S CATHOLIC INFORMATION CENTER

Some years back Father P. J. Sontag, S.J., established in the Diocese of Patna, in northern India, a way of spreading the Faith through the printed word -- an apostolic method that had been previously used with good results in Britain and the United States. Father Sontag has now applied this same technique in Poona's Catholic Information Center. The Center has prepared a packet of fifty letters that explain the chief truths of Christianity and provide thought-provoking notes about the life and work of Our Lord. The method has proved singularly effective, and promises to bring knowledge of Christ to many thousands of intellectuals for whom a correspondence course is our only practicable approach.

Advertisements inviting religious inquiries have been placed, also, in the secular press. As a result, so many requests for information have been received from educated non-Catholics that the present organization can hardly cope with the rush. This intellectual apostolate has been in operation for only eight years, but seems full of promise for the future.

AHEMEDABAD

North of Bombay lies the Diocese of Ahmedabad, where the Church is still nascent. In 1934, when this mission territory was detached from the Archdiocese of Bombay, it contained only 9,000 Catholics, widely scattered across an area about the size of Michigan. Sixteen years later, when the mission was raised to the status of a diocese, Ahmedabad's Catholics numbered 26,500. In Ahmedabad City there was only a small church which could accommodate around 350 persons. But the diocese already boasted

two high schools, around 100 elementary schools, an orphanage, an old printing press and a co-operative society.

Today, the situation has improved greatly. Catholics number about 35,000, most of whom are in the area of Gujarat. Since Ahmedabad is an important factory town, the Church has wisely sought to meet the social needs of the local people. A housing project has been inaugurated for workers in the textile factories and printing plants. There are a Catholic Social Center, a reading room, a canteen and some co-operative stores.

A number of years ago, about the time of independence, some of our Catholic neophytes--the so-called Chamar or Tanner group-- left the Church. Their defection was due to the work of anti-missionary nationalist groups. But today there is no marked hostility to the Church in the Ahmedabad region.

AJMER

The Diocese of Ajmer lies wholly within the state of Rajasthan. It covers an area of 145,000 square miles (about the size of Montana) and has a population of 15,000,000. It has a small, widely dispersed Catholic minority of 7,538. In 1890, this mission area was entrusted to the French Capuchin Fathers. After independence, the Holy See appointed Ajmer's first Indian bishop, the Right Reverend L. D'Mello, who took charge of his flock in 1949.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE PRIMITIVE TRIBESMEN

Most Indians are descended from two great peoples: the Aryans and Dravidians. Centuries before the time of Christ, the light-skinned Aryans invaded India from the northwest and pushed the Dravidians into south India. The descendants of both groups are usually Hindus. But there is another body of Indians --the primitive tribesmen -- whose ancestors were the country's original inhabitants. Numbering one-sixteenth of the population today, the tribesmen are split into isolated groups of small, dark-skinned people such as the Gonds, Bhils and Santals. Long ago, they were driven into the remote hills and jungles, where they have kept their old customs and worship tribal gods. Recently some of them have been converted to Hinduism; others to Christianity. Religious rivalry has led bigoted Hindu groups to attack the work of the Christian missionaries through such unfair means as the anti-missionary inquiry committees of Madhya Pradesh and Madhya Bharat. The effect of these committees on the Church in India is described in the text.

INDORE

The new Diocese of Indore, a suffragan of the Agra Province, lies to the north and west of Bombay within the state of Madhya Pradesh. This state is associated in Catholic minds with the recent, highly biased Madhya Pradesh Inquiry Committee -- described in Chapter 2 -- which investigated and condemned Christian missionary activity among the poor lower-caste Hindus and the primitive tribesmen of remote, rural areas. It was fortunate for the Church in Indore that its local spiritual leader, the Right Reverend Francis M. Simons, S.V.D., had the necessary courage to stand up for the rights of his flock.

Bishop Simons, a native of Holland, is a member of the Divine Word Missionaries - a society which first entered the Indian mission field in 1935. At that time, Indore was constituted as a Prefecture Apostolic from subdivisions of the Dioceses of Ajmer, Allahabad and Nagpur. In 1953, Indore was raised to the status of a diocese. Bishop Simons' jurisdiction extends over an area the size of Tennessee. Catholics here number only 17,000 among some 8,000,000 Hindu-speaking people.

In spite of the opposition of local Hindu extremists, the Church in Indore is not in any danger of disintegration. The seed of the Gospel has fallen on good ground here, and it holds out promise of a rich harvest in the years to come.

NAGPUR

Like Indore, the Archdiocese of Nagpur has also had difficulties with the Madhya Pradesh Inquiry Committee. And its Archbishop, the Most Reverend Eugene D'Souza, M.S.F.A., proved himself an able and spirited defender of the Church's interests against unjust attacks by anti-missionary forces. But today, Nagpur is no longer under Madhya Pradesh. As a result of the recent adjustments in the boundaries of India's states, most of this area is now a part of the new, bilingual Bombay State.

Nagpur, which occupies the approximate geographical center of India, received the Faith originally through priests sent out from the Catholic center at Madras. Today, the spiritual needs of Nagpur's 12,183 Catholics -- scattered widely over an archdiocese larger than North Dakota -- are met by Indian diocesan priests and the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales. Nagpur is an interesting city of 300,000 inhabitants. Its name means *town of serpents* -- doubtless a tribute to the snakes in which central India abounds. It is an important railroad and manufacturing center. Cotton, which is raised

in the surrounding countryside, is brought to Nagpur's modern factories for processing. There are several non-Catholic colleges here and a university. The Church in Nagpur maintains a fine school system, including several institutions specializing in technical education.

THREE NEW DIOCESES

The expansion of the Church's missionary activities in central India has led to the creation of three new dioceses: Raigarh-Ambikapur (formed in 1951); Jabalpur (formed in 1954); and Amravati (constituted in 1955).

Raigarh-Ambikapur has an interesting Catholic history. Prior to independence, it was divided into eight feudal states under rulers who were utterly opposed to Christian missionary activity. But in 1907, a conversion movement started spontaneously in Jashpur State. Because of the intolerant laws in force, however, it made little headway. Later, around 1935, Udiapur State was the scene of another movement into the Church, although no Catholic priest had ever set foot in that area. From 1941 to 1949, the authorities reluctantly allowed a priest to enter the territory to see Catholics in danger of death and to say Mass four times in the year. But no missionary was permitted to remain longer than forty-eight hours in the state.

It is an important point -- and one of which patriotic Indian Catholics can feel justly proud -- that religious tolerance came to this area only in 1950 upon the promulgation of the Indian Constitution. Thus India's freedom means also freedom for India's Catholics as well.

Today, Raigarh-Ambikapur is a little larger than the state of Maryland. Its 73,546 Catholics (in a population of 1,700,000) are under the care of the Indian diocesan clergy, the Jesuit Fathers and a number of Carmelite and Rosarian missionaries. Its spiritual head, the Right Reverend Oscar Servin, is a Jesuit. Catholicism is active and growing here. Almost every Catholic parish has organized its own Mutual Aid Society and Rice Bank.

Jabalpur, in the very heart of Madhya Pradesh, is under the care of the Premonstratensian Canons Religious. Catholics number 7,792 in a population of 8,000,000, most of whom are Hindus. For a number of years our missionaries have been working among the depressed tribes of this backward region. Their work came in for some unjustified criticism a few years back from a Western anthropologist, Verrier Elwin.

Amravati is another place where the Church is in its early stages. So far, about 24,000 Catholics have been formed from the diocese's population which is estimated at nearly 7,000,000. The local Catholic clergy has trained around fifty catechists to work among the villagers. And a number of schools and charitable institutions have been established in recent years. Amravati's first bishop, the Right Reverend Joseph Rozario took possession of his diocese in 1955. He is a member of the Missionaries of St. Francis

de Sales, a society which is also active in nearby Nagpur. Bishop Rozario is assisted by eighteen priests. Two religious communities of Sisters have also entered the area.

PUBLIC TRUST ACTS

To sum up our general impression of Bombay and central India, the Church is well established in the Greater Bombay area. In the hinterland, especially in Madhya Pradesh, it must cope with serious and bitter opposition from bigoted nationalist groups. But there is no reason for despair. The work of the missionaries will continue, thanks to the protection of India's Central Government.

Recently, however, a new problem has arisen in many parts of the region: the Public Trust Acts. The State Assemblies of Bombay and Madhya Pradesh have passed legislation requiring the Church to register its property and institutions as "public trusts." The Church has sought to avoid such registration on the ground that Church properties were outright gifts from the donors, and that no contracts were entered into between the donors and the ecclesiastical administrators. But the State Government have rejected our viewpoint. The Central Government - to which an appeal was made - ruled that laws affecting property administration fell within the competence of State Governments.

Church authorities, after referring the matter to the Holy See, registered churches and other ecclesiastical property with the state officials under protest. In complying with the law, therefore, they pointed out that the Church's work was of a religious or charitable nature and, hence, not subject to the new regulations. In Madhya Pradesh, the State Government is contesting this interpretation before the local courts. The Bishop of Jabalpur has been named as respondent with respect to a number of church institutions.

The Catholic hierarchy of India is watching attentively developments in the public trusts field of legislation. For if the movement to declare Church properties as public trusts becomes firmly rooted in law, there might be serious consequences to our position all over India.

7. The Ganges Country and Northern India

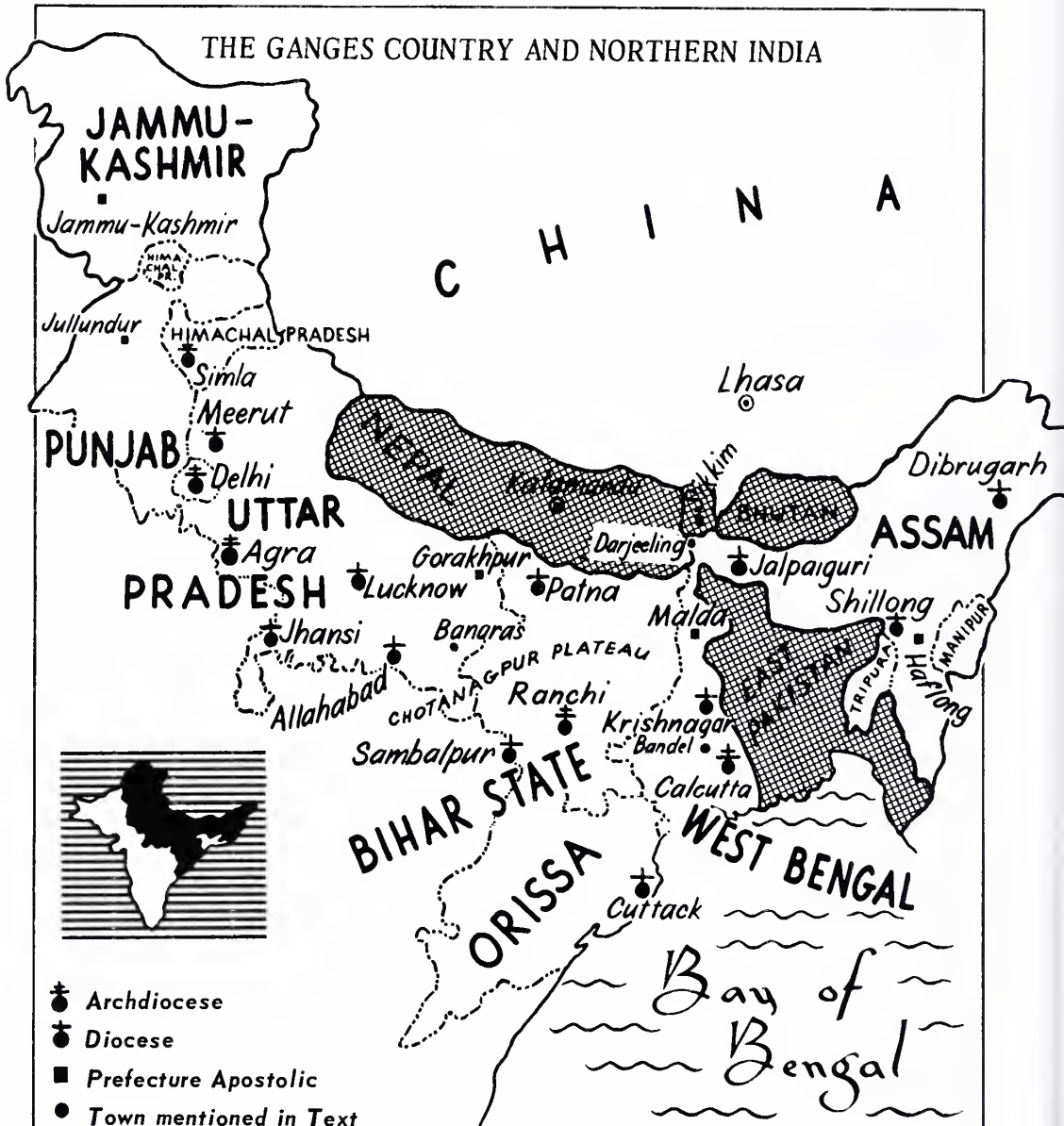
THE final zone of India for our consideration covers two of the country's great geographical regions: (1) the fertile plain of northern India through which the waters of the Ganges and Brahmaputra Rivers flow into the Bay of Bengal; and (2) the magnificent Himalayas and associated mountain ranges stretching along the country's northern border from Kashmir in the west to rainy Assam in the east.

The plain of the Ganges and its many tributary rivers is the true heartland of our country. An immense lowland, torrid in summer and almost treeless, it stretches from the Thar Desert of Rajasthan to the wide Ganges Delta of Bengal. Here, in thousands of small farm villages, 200,000,000 Indians earn their livelihood by raising rice, sugar, wheat and other food crops. Here, also, are located many of our great cities - Agra, Banaras, Delhi and Calcutta.

There is an old saying that whoever holds Hindustan, or the Ganges country, controls all of India. This is true not only politically but also in a religious sense. For centuries the Ganges Plain was a battleground of warring Hindu kings and Moslem conquerors. Akbar the Great (1556-1605), India's mighty Moslem ruler, established his court at Fatehpur Sikri, now a deserted city near Agra. And New Delhi, founded in modern times as the British capital of India, is a strategic communications point. From here British influence was maintained in the whole subcontinent by a system of military garrisons linked together by excellent railroad lines. Today New Delhi is the busy seat of our Central Government.

Politically, the Ganges country and northern India are organized today under seven states: Jammu and Kashmir; the Punjab; Uttar Pradesh; Bihar; Orissa; West Bengal; and Assam. New Delhi -- like the District of Columbia -- is a separate federal territory administered by the Central Government.

THE GANGES COUNTRY AND NORTHERN INDIA



Northern India, with a population of more than 200,000,000 is the country's most important zone. But unfortunately this is the region where the Church has made the least headway in India. The whole of northern India is divided for administrative purposes into four large ecclesiastical provinces: Agra (around 35,000 Catholics); Delhi-Simla (just under 25,000 Catholics); Ranchi on the Chotanagpur Plateau (333,000 Catholics); and Calcutta (around 250,000 Catholics). These provinces are subdivided into the archdioceses, dioceses and prefectures apostolic shown on the map.

NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

From the standpoint of the Catholic Church the region presents special problems. It has proved, on the whole, a rather barren mission field. This is easily understood in view of the strong non-Christian religious traditions of the area. Its dominant religion, Hinduism, is proclaimed to the people in many magnificent temples. Hindu pilgrims gather by the thousands each year in Banaras on the Ganges to bathe in the "mother of rivers." Hindu religious ceremonies and the caste system still dominate the life of most of the people.

But other non-Christian creeds are also held by wide segments of the population. Islam is preached in the huge Jamna Mosque at Old Delhi and in many other shrines. Agra is particularly rich in Moslem monuments, of which the Taj Mahal is the most famous. The Sikhs have their golden temple at Amritsar in the Punjab; the Jains have many places of worship in Bihar; and ruins of Buddhist temples are living proofs of a religious faith that arose here centuries ago, but is now almost extinct in the land of its birth.

CHRISTIANITY UNDER BRITISH RULE

Despite some missionary efforts dating back to an earlier period, Christianity - for all practical purposes - did not reach northern India until British colonial times. The British authorities authorized Protestant and Catholic chaplains to enter the area to serve the religious needs of British troops and railroad personnel. Catholic chaplains were always few in number. Of a necessity, they dedicated themselves primarily to the European Catholics, the Anglo-Indians and Catholic migrants from southern India in the employ of the British Government.

All along, there have been too few missionaries in northern India to make much of an impression on the local population. The Catholic chaplains of the nineteenth century were not well provided with funds. Thus they were not able to build many charitable institutions for the ordinary people of India. The schools they conducted were designed primarily for the children of British colonists and English-speaking persons. Not many chaplains learned the local languages, and for this reason they were cut off from fruitful contacts with the great majority of Indians.

Indian converts to Christianity during the nineteenth century were generally administrative officials or domestic servants whose duties brought them into contact with Europeans. After conversion, many adopted the Western way of life. In the eyes of their fellow Indians, they had not only given up their old religious affiliation but had also become denationalized. For this reason, Christians were long suspected of latent opposition to the Indian independence movement. In recent decades, however, Indians of all classes have grasped more fully the Catholic Church's supranational

character and universal appeal. Thanks to the expansion of the Church's organization and the establishment of many Catholic schools and institutions, the old prejudices against Christianity are slowly dying out.

ECCLESIASTICAL DIVISIONS

Today the Church in northern India consists of four large Metropolitan Provinces: Agra, Calcutta, Delhi-Simla and Ranchi. The spiritual heads of three of these provinces are Indians by birth. The head of the fourth province -- the Most Reverend Ferdinand Périer, S.J., -- is a Belgian by birth, but he has now become an Indian citizen.

Under the four Metropolitan Provinces are eleven suffragan dioceses and seven Prefectures Apostolic. Only the main developments in each of the four Metropolitan Provinces can be considered in this brief study.

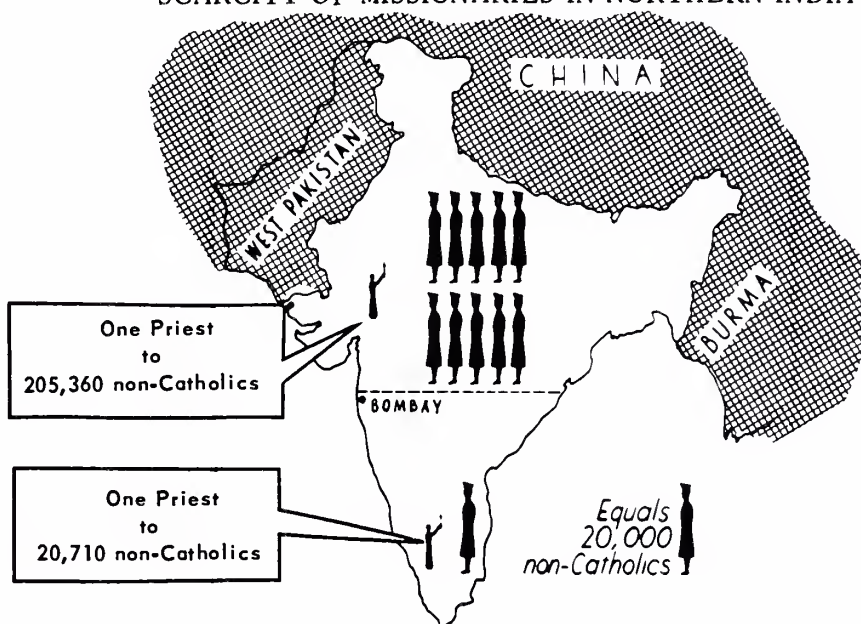
JESUITS AT THE MOGUL COURT

In the sixteenth century, Akbar the Great, India's able and humane Moslem ruler, was profoundly distressed over the bitter religious controversies that rent the people of his realm. For political reasons he sought to form a new creed that would unite all discordant elements into a harmonious bloc. To achieve this object, he requested the leaders of India's main religious groups -- the Moslems, Hindus, Jains, Zoroastrians and Christians -- to send representatives to the court. Spokesmen for each faith were offered an opportunity to explain its teachings and holy books to the Emperor and his advisers.

An Armenian Christian bore Akbar's invitation to the Jesuit Fathers at Goa. In February, 1579, Father Rudolfo Acquaviva, an Italian Jesuit, set out for the north in the company of Father Antonio Monserrate, a Spaniard, and Father Francisco Henriquez, a Persian convert from Islam. Traveling slowly via Surat and Gwalior, they reached Akbar's capital, Fatehpur Sikri, a year later. Here they were received with great courtesy and assigned a residence near the famous *Ibadat Khanna*, or House of Worship. The Emperor supplied the Fathers with food from the royal household, and often visited them. On occasion, he even went walking with his Catholic guests.

For a time the missionaries had high hopes of converting Akbar, but soon they realized their mistake. In 1582, the Emperor proclaimed as state religion a new, syncretic creed whose elements were borrowed from various faiths. Sadly, the Jesuits left the royal court. Later, in 1590 and in 1592, other Jesuit delegations visited Akbar, but were equally unsuccessful in their efforts to convert him to Christianity. After 1595, however, the Jesuits maintained a more or less permanent mission at the Mogul court, where they remained until the suppression of their Society in 1773. During their long association with the Mogul Empire the Jesuits were able to make

SCARCITY OF MISSIONARIES IN NORTHERN INDIA



An imaginary line drawn across India just above Bombay gives some interesting Catholic statistics. South of the line we find a priest for every 711 Catholics and 20,710 non-Catholics. North of the line there is a priest for every 690 Catholics and 205,360 non-Catholics. (By way of comparison, the United States has one priest for every 690 Catholics and 2,700 non-Catholics.) The Government of India's policy of cutting back on visas for foreign missionaries imposes a real hardship on missions in the north, which have in the past relied heavily on missionaries from Europe and America.

Source: Most Reverend Leonard Raymond, Bishop of Allahabad, who is quoted in *Fides*, No. 350, February 28, 1953.

very few converts. But the moderating influence of the Jesuits induced some of the Mogul emperors to show tolerance in the religious sphere.

CAPUCHINS IN NEPAL AND TIBET

In addition to the Jesuits, the Capuchins have played an important role in the early Catholic history of northern India. Early in the eighteenth century, the Sacred College of Propaganda Fide assigned to Italian Capuchin Fathers the task of bringing Christ to the Hindus of Nepal and the Buddhists of Tibet. In 1708, four Capuchin pioneers set out from Katamandu, the capital of Nepal. Crossing the Pango Pass (an elevation 19,000 feet above sea-level), the missionaries hastened on to Lhasa in Tibet, which they

reached with difficulty two months later. Other Capuchins soon joined them, and before long a Catholic mission had been established in the capital city of the Dalai Lama. But the Buddhist monks that ruled Tibet later turned upon the missionaries and their few converts. By 1745, the missionaries had been driven back from Tibet into Nepal. Not long afterwards, a revolution among the Gurkha people of Nepal forced the Capuchins to retreat into India. Thus, in a few short years, the heroic missionary work of decades was undone. Tibet and Nepal became forbidden lands to all Catholic missionaries.

CAPUCHINS AND A CATHOLIC PRINCESS

The Holy See soon found a new assignment in northern India for the Capuchins. They were commissioned to take over the Church's mission at the court of the Great Mogul in Agra. After the departure of the Jesuits in 1773, two Carmelite Fathers had handled this important post on a temporary basis. The Italian Capuchins proved to be skillful diplomats. Within the limits to which they were subject as guests of a Moslem monarch, they were able to preach the Gospel discreetly.

The Mogul Empire was then in full decline as a result of long years of warfare against the Mahrattas, Sikhs and Europeans. But its decadent court became the scene of a memorable episode in India's Catholic history - the conversion of Begum (Princess) Zebunissa Joanna Sumru from Islam to Christianity. The Begum, a Moslem dancing girl of great wit and beauty, had met in Agra a German or Alsatian soldier of fortune, Walter Reinhardt, called Sumru by the Indians. Reinhardt was a ruthless disciplinarian who held a high position in the army of the Great Mogul. Falling in love with the talented Moslem woman, he asked her hand in marriage. While he was away on military campaigns, the Begum -- as vassal of the Mogul Empire -- ruled the Sumru estate at Sardhana, fifty miles from Agra. After her husband's death in 1778, she assumed command of his 4,000 troops and their eighty European officers. The former dancer had become a not inconsiderable power in the realm.

At this point, a remarkable change came over the Begum. Under the influence of her husband and the Capuchins at court, she had acquired an interest in Christianity. By 1781, Father Gregorio of the Capuchin mission administered to her the Sacrament of Baptism. The rest of the Begum's life was devoted to pious works at Sardhana, where she built a number of churches and gave hospitality to Catholic refugees from other parts of India. On her death a vast fortune was left to Catholic charities and for the education of the clergy. Her name is not forgotten in Sardhana today. For the town has a Catholic population of 1,220, a convent run by the Nuns of Jesus and Mary, and a secondary school conducted by the Brothers of St. Gabriel.

CATHOLIC PROGRESS IN AGRA

Today the Metropolitan Province of Agra embraces 128,000 square miles or an area about the size of New Mexico. Catholics are relatively few in numbers -- only 35,041 in a population of 74,247,622. They are served by fifty-four Indian priests and forty-four foreign missionary priests. Of Agra's 149 Sisters ninety-seven are Indian nationals and fifty-two are from abroad. In 1956, upon the retirement of Archbishop Vanni, the Holy See appointed an Indian Capuchin as his successor, the Most Reverend Romauld Basil Athaide.

Archbishop Athaide's vast area of supervision includes the Dioceses of Ajmer, Allahabad, Indore, Lucknow, Meerut and Jhansi, plus the Prefecture Apostolic of Gorakhpur. Developments in Ajmer and Indore have been considered separately in Chapter 6.

Allahabad lies entirely within the state of Uttar Pradesh. A small diocese by Indian standards, it is about twice the size of Massachusetts and has 5,000 Catholics in a population of 11,000,000. The missionary pioneers here were Italian Capuchins, but since 1947 Indian diocesan priests have been in charge. It is the site of a major seminary and a number of educational institutions.

Lucknow was once a British garrison town. For these parts, it is an old and well-organized Catholic center with a cathedral dating back to 1860 and two university colleges that were built in 1885. The departure of Catholic British troops greatly reduced the diocese's Catholics, who are estimated at 5,300 today.

In 1940, Lucknow was raised to the status of a diocese. Its first bishop, the Right Reverend Conrad de Vito, O.F.M. Cap., has pushed missionary work since his arrival in 1946. Five new mission stations have been opened up in recent years, and a recently founded society for lay women -- the Maids of the Poor -- has established a school, an orphanage and a foundling home in the town of Barabanki and St. Francis' Hospital at Lucknow. In addition, three congregations of foreign missionary Sisters are engaged in educational and charitable work in the Lucknow district. They are: the Sisters of Loreto; Italian Canossian Daughters of Charity; and Sisters of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary from Germany.

PROVINCE OF DELHI-SIMLA

Delhi, a city of 520,000 inhabitants, is situated on the banks of the Jumna River. It was founded in 1638 by Shah Jahan, one of the Mogul emperors, who beautified his new capital with a magnificent marble palace and many mosques. A thick wall surrounds the old royal section of Delhi, cutting it off from the crowded slums in which so many of the city's poorer people live.

In modern times Delhi has become a busy center of manufacturing and trade. Outside the old city, the suburb of New Delhi has been the seat of India's Government since 1931. New Delhi's impressive public buildings are in the European style.

Until 1937, Delhi's relatively small Catholic community (most of its members are from other parts of India) was administered by the Archbishop of Agra. In that year, however, the Holy See united its mission station in Delhi with that in Simla to form a new ecclesiastical province, Delhi-Simla. Simla, a pleasant resort town in the mountains about 170 miles north of Delhi, has a cool healthful climate. It was the summer capital of India from 1864 to 1947.

The first Archbishop of Delhi-Simla, the Most Reverend Sylvester Mulligan, was assisted by English Capuchin priests, most of whom served as military chaplains. They had established a mission station at Sirsa, a town 180 miles from Delhi. Upon Archbishop Mulligan's death in 1950, the Holy See entrusted the diocese to the Indian diocesan clergy. The present Archbishop, the Most Reverend Joseph Fernandez, is aided by twenty-two secular priests, two Indian Capuchins and five Redemptorist Fathers. Three of the Redemptorists specialize in giving retreats and missions all over the surrounding area. A group of Medical Mission Sisters from the United States runs a large, well-equipped hospital in Delhi.

Archbishop Fernandez' jurisdiction covers -- in addition to his Metropolitan See -- the Prefectures Apostolic of Jullundur and Jammu-Kashmir. All together, this is an area almost as large as Oregon. Its population of 24,200,000 is mostly Hindu or Moslem in religion. Catholics here number but 24,859 of whom 6,000 come from other parts of India. Jullundur alone accounts for 10,000 of the province's Catholics. A relatively new territory, it has been entrusted to the English Capuchins. Jammu and Kashmir form one state, the northernmost in all India. Its capital, Srinagar, is an enchanting spot surrounded by lakes, canals and stately Mogul gardens. In the background rise the snowy peaks of the high Himalayas. The Mill Hill Fathers serve Jammu-Kashmir's tiny band of 350 Catholics.

PROVINCE OF CALCUTTA

The Metropolitan Province of Calcutta, one of the largest in the world, covers 249,555 square miles (an area slightly smaller than the state of Texas). Its total population is 79,120,000, including 251,835 Catholics. They are served by 417 priests (of whom 113 are Indian and 304 foreign missionaries), and 1,101 Sisters (of whom 583 are Indians and 518 are from abroad).

Politically, this enormous province embraces three Indian states -- West Bengal, Bihar and Assam -- and the independent Kingdoms of Nepal and

Sikkim. From the standpoint of Catholic administration, the Archdiocese of Calcutta has nine suffragans - more than any other single province in India. They include the Dioceses of Krishnagar, Jalpaiguri, Patna, Shillong and Dibrugarh and the Prefectures Apostolic of Malda, Haflong, Sikkim and Bhagalpur.

MISSIONARY PIONEERS OF BENGAL

The first Christian missionaries in the Bengal area were Augustinian Fathers from Goa. They came late in the sixteenth century to minister to the religious needs of a Portuguese trading colony which had grown up along the Hooghly River, one of the many tributaries of the Ganges. The Church of the Most Holy Rosary at Bandel dates from 1676.

Shortly afterwards, Bengal was the scene of a fierce struggle for power between local rulers subject to the Mogul Empire and the English East India Company. In 1686, Job Charnock, an official of the East India Company, was forced to withdraw from the trading post at Hooghly to Sutanati, a village about eighty-five miles from the sea. Four years later, a permanent town was established at Sutanati, and it became the nucleus from which Calcutta slowly arose. The first Catholic chapel was built here in 1770.

In 1834, the Holy See founded the Vicariate Apostolic of Western Bengal and entrusted it to the English Jesuits. A few years later, because of the lack of English priests, Jesuits from Belgium were called upon for assistance. They found themselves in charge of an area eight times the size of Belgium. Unsanitary living conditions, combined with a difficult climate, caused many deaths among the early missionaries. Monsignor Van Heule, who was appointed Vicar Apostolic in 1864, is reported to have informed friends that he would "wear the mitre gracefully for six months." In point of fact, he died only five months later. But the missionaries did not draw back from making the supreme sacrifice for the spread of the faith. New recruits from Europe filled the vacancies left by their dying comrades. Through their heroic efforts the Church survived on Indian soil.

MODERN CALCUTTA

Over the past two and one half centuries Calcutta has known a phenomenal growth. It is today a modern cosmopolitan city, second largest in the Union of India. One of the busiest harbors of Asia, it is equipped with up-to-date port facilities extending for ten miles along the river banks. Howrah, a suburb, is the largest jute-manufacturing center in the world. Calcutta also possesses a splendid park -- the Maidan -- and many important public buildings, banks and educational institutions. Formerly the capital of British India (from 1773 to 1912), it is still the chief city of West Bengal.

CATHOLIC PROGRESS

The present Catholic leader in Calcutta, the Most Reverend Ferdinand Périer, S.J., is something of a legend in India. Born in Belgium in 1875, he was ordained in 1909, elected coadjutor for Calcutta in 1921, and became Archbishop in 1924. In 1948, a splendid ceremony commemorated his long years of service for the Church. The Archbishop is now an Indian national. Thanks to his missionary zeal, new missions have been opened in the Darjeeling district, high up in the Himalayan ranges, and in the Santal Paraganas. The Archdiocese has today 90,000 Catholics in a population of over 30,000,000.

CHARITY IN CALCUTTA

Calcutta's population has more than doubled in the past quarter century, swollen by the influx of many refugees during World War II and countless unskilled workers in the postwar period. As in so many big cities, there was (and is still) great suffering among the poor and homeless, the sick and unemployed. Public agencies, their resources already overtaxed, could do little to stem the tide of human misery.

But some eight years ago, a woman with a great heart felt that she must do something to alleviate the sufferings of Calcutta's slum-dwellers. Her name is Mother Teresa; she was born of Albanian parents in Yugoslavia, and first came to India in 1910 as a Loreto Sister. Having obtained the permission of her superiors, Mother Teresa founded a new congregation -- the Missionaries of Charity -- and began to work among the poorest of the poor.

The Missionaries of Charity haunt Calcutta's slums, picking up sick children and persons left in the streets to die. In a house provided by the Archbishop they have established their famous *Nirmal Hriday*, or Home for the Dying, which is unique in India. Drawing on generous support from the Catholics of the United States and other countries, the Sisters have now extended their activities to include medical dispensaries, Sunday school classes, and vocational training centers for children and adults.

Many young women have volunteered their services to Mother Teresa. She is assisted by sixty-two Sisters, most of whom are from the Bengal and Chotanagpur areas. Among them are also two Sisters of European origin who have acquired Indian citizenship.

Almost overnight the Missionaries of Charity, by their devoted service, have won the hearts of people all over India. Recently, a prominent Hindu insisted on paying a Sister's tuition fees to a medical school; another supplied her with the expensive medical books. Rich and poor, Christians and non-Christians alike -- all regard the work of the Sisters as the finest embodiment of Christian love.

CALCUTTA'S SUFFRAGANS

Outside the Metropolitan See, the largest number of Catholics (62,743) is found in Shillong Diocese which -- like Krishnagar with its 5,457 Catholics -- is under the Salesians of St. John Bosco. As a result of the partition of Bengal between India and Pakistan, Jalpaiguri (24,684 Catholics) and Malda (4,655 Catholics) have been established as separate ecclesiastical units in recent years. Smaller groups of the faithful are found in Haflong (3,523), Sikkim (2,137) and the newly created Prefecture Apostolic of Bhagalpur.

Of particular interest to American Catholics is the Diocese of Patna, which comprises much of Bihar State in India and the Kingdom of Nepal. Here seventy-four Jesuits from the Chicago Province, aided by ten Scholastics and six Brothers, attend to the spiritual needs of 30,000 Catholics in a population of 33,000,000. Also stationed in the Patna area are a few missionaries representing the Third Order Regular of St. Francis of Penance from Loretto, Pennsylvania.

Long before the time of Christ, Patna City -- then known as the Lotus City -- was a famous trading center. Although its ancient splendor is now largely forgotten, Patna has a population of 175,000 today and is Bihar's capital. An important market town on the Ganges, it is full of crooked streets and crowded, busy bazaars. It is an active Catholic center as well. With characteristic energy the American Jesuits have organized thirty-seven parishes or stations throughout the diocese, including seventeen relatively new missions. There is an excellent information center in Patna City. Many splendid educational institutions have been opened for Catholic and non-Catholic students. In Chapter 3 an account was given of the famous Bettiah school incident which throws light on the problem of religious and nationalist prejudices which confront our missionaries in this area. It will be recalled that only prompt action by the authorities of Bihar State dispersed an intolerant mob demonstrating in front of a Jesuit high school. Fortunately, there has been no recurrence of such anti-Christian and anti-foreign bias; the Jesuits have been able to continue their valuable work without interruption.

PROVINCE OF RANCHI

Two hundred and fifty miles west of Calcutta lies Ranchi, a small city on the Chotanagpur Plateau. This is -- from the point of view of the Catholic missions -- a bright spot on the map. For a remarkable conversion movement started here seventy years ago, and has continued to the present day.

The inhabitants of the Chotanagpur district belong to primitive tribes -- the Mundas, Hos and Ouraons -- who long ago sought refuge among the hills

from hostile invaders of the Ganges Plain. Belgian Jesuits from Calcutta were the first missionaries in the area. They came in 1877 as military chaplains, but later began to open missions among the local people. Father Constant Liewens, who took charge of a village mission in 1885, was shocked to discover the misery of Chotanagpur's farmers. Not only were the tribesmen regularly defrauded by their greedy *zamindars*, or landlords, but they could secure no legal redress for their wrongs since most of the lawyers and judges were in the pay of the *zamindars*. Resolved to strike a blow for justice, Father Liewens hired an honest lawyer to handle a case involving a local farmer and his landlord. To the surprise of the whole district, the farmer won.

Soon many farmers found their way to the missionary's door. Because he helped them simply, asking nothing in return, they placed their trust in him. Some listened eagerly as Father Liewens spoke of Christ and His life among the poor fishermen of Galilee. To Chotanagpur's farmers the message of the Gospel gave a new sense of dignity. For the first time, they realized that they were children of God.

Within a year and a half, Chotanagpur had 14,000 new converts. Father Liewens and his associates called for additional missionaries as the conversion wave began to mount rapidly. One district -- Barway -- with 50,000 inhabitants was won to the last man. By 1927, the Holy See separated Chotanagpur from the Archdiocese of Calcutta and created the Diocese of Ranchi. Many churches and schools were built, and a seminary was founded for the training of local priests. In 1951, Ranchi received its first Indian bishop, the Right Reverend Nicolas Kujur, S.J. Two years later, the diocese was made a Metropolitan See with Cuttack and Sambalpur as suffragans. The whole area is only a little smaller than Minnesota and has a total population of 11,720,000. Catholics now number 333,415 -- an impressive figure of strength for rural northern India. Ranchi itself, of course, accounts for the great majority of the area's faithful.

More striking than the size of Chotanagpur's Catholic community is its quality. Some areas are now entirely Catholic in outlook. There are many candidates for the priesthood, and a local Indian Sisterhood -- the Daughters of St. Anne -- has over 160 members. In numerous ways the Church reaches the people and improves their way of life. True, Chotanagpur's tribesmen are to some extent outside the mainstream of Indian society. But if God wills it, the faith that has transformed Chotanagpur's Catholic community may one day spread far and wide through our great land!

8. A Look to the Future

THE Church in India will not have an easy path in the decades that lie ahead. For there will be many obstacles to surmount, many trials to endure in patience. Yet India's Catholics rightly face the future in a spirit of optimism. We believe that the Catholic message will reach more and more Indians as time goes by, and that Catholicism will have a fair opportunity before the bar of Indian public opinion.

GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

Our optimism is not the result of wishful thinking but is based on solid facts. To begin with, the Church's progress has been truly outstanding in recent decades. Catholics numbered barely 2,500,000 in 1921; and now our strength is double that figure. The Indianization of the Catholic clergy continues at a rapid pace. In 1949, there were 800 students attending the major seminaries of the country; today they are estimated to be 1,430. At present, more than 1,000 young men are enrolled in the novitiates and scholasticates of India's many religious societies. The largest single group is that of the Jesuits.

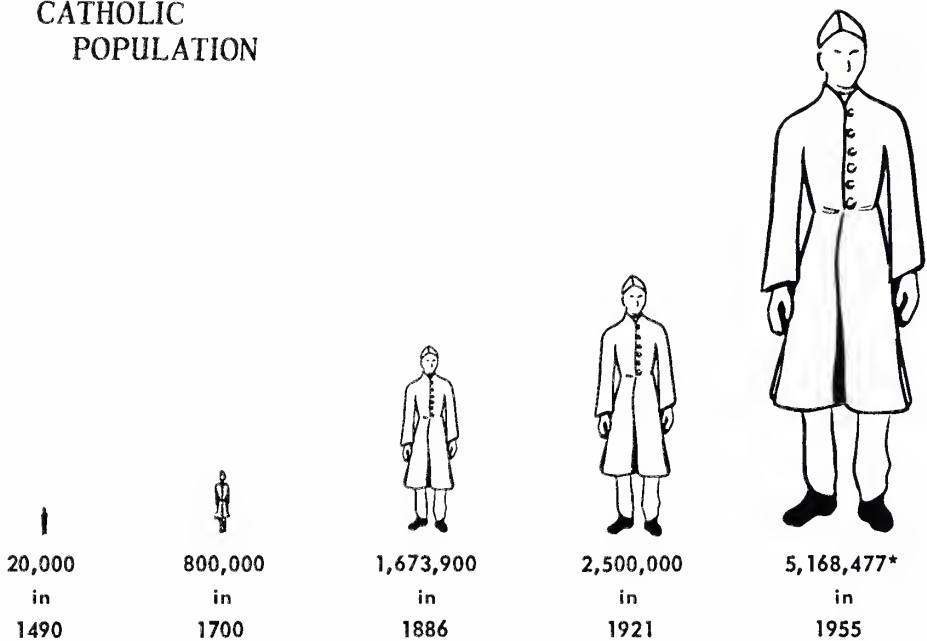
IMPROVEMENTS IN CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

Since independence, the Church has streamlined its administration in the interest of greater efficiency. This important task was inaugurated by India's First Plenary Council, which was a landmark in the Church's history in our country. The council met at Bangalore in January, 1950; to it the Holy See sent as Papal Legate His Excellency Norman Cardinal Gilroy, Archbishop of Sydney. The council dealt with many pressing matters in connection

with the new political status of India. It established a uniform system of ecclesiastical legislation for the whole country, and set the pattern that we shall follow in meeting future problems that may arise on the national level.

The Bishops' Conference of India also plays an important role in the Church's development. It was established in 1944 at a meeting in Madras attended by India's ten Metropolitan Archbishops, including the Archbishop of Goa. The conference consists of two committees: a Standing Committee whose members are elected by the whole Conference; and a Working Committee, which includes special sections dealing with Catholic education, seminaries, Catholic Action, vigilance and social action, catechetics and Church extension.

INDIA'S CATHOLIC POPULATION



Since the start of the modern missionary era four and a half centuries ago, the Church's membership in India has increased from 20,000 to over 5,000,000. Catholics today are slightly more than half of India's Christian community. But in India's immense population of 358,000,000 they remain a tiny fraction -- roughly 1.3 percent. The Church, however, is well rooted in India. Like the mustard seed, Catholicism in this ancient land may rise from small beginnings to become one day a mighty force.

**Source: The Catholic Directory for India, 1954, with the exception of the figure for 1955 which was supplied by the author.*

The Catholic Bishops' Conference promotes closer unity among the bishops and enables the hierarchy to take concerted action on matters involving the Church's interests. It has been recognized by the Government of India as the Church's official mouthpiece and acts as sponsoring agency for Catholic foreign missionaries in India. Pronouncements of the conference are publicized in the secular press and have had a powerful influence in the field of social reform and welfare work. The conference also fosters among Indian Catholics a deeper sense of their civic and moral responsibilities.

CATHOLIC INFLUENCE ON INDIAN LIFE

The Church is respected by all classes and creeds of Indians because of its substantial contributions to the nation as a whole. Our schools and colleges have been frequently praised by prominent non-Christians, including many businessmen and Government officials. Often such men show their preference for our school system by sending their own children, particularly girls, to institutions conducted by Catholic religious communities. One feature of our schools is especially admired: the Catholic emphasis on character training.

Although relatively few of the non-Christian students attending our schools become converts to Catholicism, they acquire great respect for the priests, Brothers and Sisters who train them for future service to God, their country and humanity. The students are constantly exposed to the noblest concepts of scholarship, tolerance and fair play in their classrooms and on the playing fields.

Catholic hospitals, dispensaries, homes for the aged and other institutions of mercy are recognized by Indians of all classes as the expression of Christ's teachings. People are profoundly touched by the kindness of the gentle Sisters. When the nuns appease hunger, quench thirst, dress wounds and wipe away the tears of the patients, they do so in Christ's name. And those who benefit by such devotion feel the mysterious force that inspires it. Thus many non-Christians seek out deliberately the medical centers run by Catholic Sisters, for they know that here they will receive not only excellent physical care but also something more -- spiritual comfort and the peace that comes from God.

LESSENING OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

Although the Church in India is opposed by powerful forces -- extreme nationalism, communism and the materialistic spirit of the times -- we Catholics are not unduly alarmed. Such antagonistic currents of thought have often attacked the Church in other lands, but the Church still stands and

will continue to do so until the end of time. We have full confidence in the good sense and tolerance of the great majority of our countrymen. And we trust the State Legislatures, the National Parliament and the leaders of our Central Government.

The common man has no prejudice against priests and Sisters, either those born in India or abroad. He judges them by their character and conduct, and is grateful for the educational and charitable care they give to Indians without regard for creed or social background. Even the anti-missionary Madhya Pradesh Inquiry Committee's report paid the following tribute to the accomplishments of the missionaries:

"The contribution of Christian missionaries to the shaping of Indian life in modern times has, indeed, been very impressive. Apart from the controversy on the point of proselytization, they merit high appreciation as pioneers in the fields of education and medical relief. The names of many who served in our State as also in the country at large commanded great respect in their times. They established schools, colleges, hospitals, dispensaries, orphanages and institutions for the maimed and handicapped. They elevated the neglected classes to high social positions and made them worthy of filling responsible posts in public services, and in all cases made them conscious of their dignity as men and inspired them with self-respect. They stimulated many religious and social reforms in Hindu society, and made it self-conscious. They have helped in the elevation of the status of women by giving the lead in female education. The Community Centres and Industrial Schools opened by them are, like their other institutions, the best of their kind. India will ever be grateful for the services rendered by them, no less than for the policy of religious neutrality generally pursued by the British Government, and for the eminent Oriental scholars of Europe and America who brought to light the hidden treasures of the ancient Indian wisdom."

PROBLEMS OF CONVERSION

It is, of course, true that the idea of conversion to Christianity is regarded with aversion by many educated Indians. They cannot understand our claim to be a religion revealed by God Himself, the exclusive and perfect creed intended for all peoples of the earth. Adherents of Hinduism cannot grasp the fact that a particular faith, Christianity, has a monopoly of truth. For this reason, the number of conversions in India as a whole is not commensurate with the heroic efforts of the Catholic priesthood. Nevertheless, in many parts of the country, groups of persons spontaneously request religious instruction and eventually ask for Baptism.

What is it, then, that attracts Indian converts to the Church? Primarily, they are seeking the truth and recognize it in the religion that we preach to them. Many are first drawn to Catholicism as a result of the admiration they feel for Catholics with whom they have contacts. Foreign missionaries, in particular, seem to be living examples of Christian love. No one can fail to

GROWTH OF THE CATHOLIC CLERGY IN INDIA, 1900-1955

Year	Indian Priests	Foreign Priests	Total
1900	1,580	826	2,406
1920	1,945	1,056	3,002
1955	3,500	2,335	5,835*

In India, as in other mission lands, the Church has tried recently to fill as many vacancies in the hierarchy as possible with members of the national clergy. Results in India are as follows:

Year	Archbishops	Bishops	Auxiliary Bishops	Coadjutor Bishops
1955	15 (12 Indians)	47 (26 Indians)	3 (3 Indians)	1 (1 Indian)

*Source: Ernest Hull, S.J., for the 1900 and 1920 figures, *The Messenger*, March, 1934.

be impressed by the self-abnegation of men and women who leave their homes and families to serve in a strange land, often under difficult circumstances. They are splendid witnesses to their faith and the power of the Gospel.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY OF CATHOLICS

Catholics in India have a tremendous moral responsibility. By their personal conduct the Church is frequently judged. Mahatma Gandhi once expressed his reaction to Christianity in these words: "I like your Christ, but I dislike your Christians because they are so little like Christ." Such a sweeping condemnation is unfair, of course. Gandhi had only a limited acquaintance with Christians, and knew very few Catholics. Furthermore, it is an unwise idealism that expects too much from too many, and is intolerant of the cockle that grows up with the wheat in God's earthly kingdom.

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that many of our Catholic people were for a long time insufficiently instructed in their faith. This was due to the lack of priests and catechists and the backward social condition of many converts. Over recent decades, however, there has been a remarkable improvement in Catholics, both in their understanding of the faith and in their social background. Long ago, St. Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan remarked: *Non in dialectica complacuit Deo saluum facere populum suum.* ("It is not in

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY COLLEGES IN INDIA

Students in Colleges for Men

Year	No. of Colleges	Catholics	Other Christians	Non-Christians	Total
1945	16	2,700	272	9,022	11,994
1950	23	4,421	1,621	11,448	17,490
1955	30*	6,010	2,988	14,301	23,299

Students in Colleges for Women

Year	No. of Colleges	Catholics	Other Christians	Non-Christians	Total
1945	14	885	493	1,477	2,855
1950	20	1,305	729	2,850	4,884
1955	24	2,330	1,128	5,228	8,686

* Four co-educational colleges have also been established since 1955, but so far no statistics are available for these institutions.

Pioneers in the field of Catholic education in India were the Jesuits who established the first Catholic college at Trichinopoly in 1868. By 1925, there were seven colleges for men and four for women in southern India. In recent years, the expansion of women's institutions has been particularly remarkable. Most of the colleges are in the Kerala, Madras, Mysore and Bombay areas. The Xavier Board of Higher Education, established in May, 1951, provides the various colleges of the country with common policies and a basis for united action.

University colleges in India correspond to American undergraduate colleges. Graduates of Catholic university colleges who wish to take advanced courses in law, medicine, technology and other subjects must continue their academic work at one of India's thirty-eight secular universities. This is because there is no Catholic University in India. Although the lack of such an institution is keenly felt by India's Catholics, it has been impossible to establish one for the following reasons: (1) the difficulty of raising the necessary funds; and (2) the Government's unwillingness to recognize universities maintained by religious groups.

the economy of Divine Providence to save souls by means of dialectical arguments.") And a noted American convert to Catholicism in our own day, Clare Booth Luce points out that she was not drawn to the Church by logic alone.

Years ago, Orestes Brownson, one of the most distinguished converts to the Church in America, was struck by the opportunities Catholics have to spread their faith merely by living it. Brownson was referring to American conditions in the nineteenth century, but his words are of equal truth in respect to contemporary India:

"We are apt to forget that the quiet and unobtrusive virtues of Catholics, living in the midst of a hostile world, are always powerful in their operations in the world, and that the world is converted not by direct efforts to convert it, but by the efforts we make to live as good Catholics and to save souls. The little handful of sincere and devout Catholics, the little family of sincere and earnest clients of Mary seeking to imitate her virtues in their own community, are as a leaven hidden in three measures of meal. Virtue goes forth from them, diffuses itself on all sides, until the whole is leavened."

India stands today on the brink of many far-reaching changes. Its people, free after centuries of foreign rule, are re-examining their way of life. Many old prejudices are being cast aside; and new ideas are being subjected to an open-minded scrutiny. Herein lies a great opportunity for Catholicism. Let us have confidence that our leaders -- bishops, priests and laymen -- will know how to use the present moment to the greater glory of India and the Church.

MAIN DATES IN INDIA'S CATHOLIC HISTORY

A.D.

- 52 St. Thomas the Apostle lands on the Malabar Coast and begins to found Christian communities.
- 72 St. Thomas is martyred and buried near Mylapore.
- 345 Thomas Cana, a merchant from Syria, establishes a Christian colony in Travancore.
- 1122 Mar John of India receives the Pallium from Pope Callistus II.
- 1321 Four Franciscan missionaries are martyred at Thana by the Moslems.
- 1330 Pope John XXII consecrates Jourdain de Sévérac, a French Dominican, Bishop of Quilon on the Malabar Coast.
- 1498 Vasco da Gama lands in India.
- 1514 Pope Leo X grants to the Kings of Portugal the rights of patronage over the Church in India.
- 1534 Goa becomes the seat of a bishop.
- 1542 St. Francis Xavier reaches Goa. He later extends his missionary work to Travancore.
- 1548 Arrival of the Dominicans.
- 1572 Arrival of the Augustinians.
- 1594 Departure of the first Jesuit Mission to the Mogul Court.
- 1599 The St. Thomas Christians acknowledge the supremacy of the Holy See at Diamper.
- 1606 Robert de Nobili, S.J., begins his missionary work at Madurai.
- 1637 Matthew de Castro, a Brahman Oratorian from Goa, is the first Indian to be consecrated Bishop by the Pope. The Holy See creates Vicariates independent of the Portuguese Crown.
- 1642 Father Ephreim, a French Capuchin, is made Perfect Apostolic of Madras.
- 1653 Many St. Thomas Christians go into the Jacobite schism, rejecting the administration of the Latin bishops and replacing them with schismatic bishops from Syria.
- 1744 Cardinal de Tournon, the Papal Legate, condemns certain rites and customs used by the Jesuit missionaries in India.
- 1745 The Capuchin Mission in Tibet is driven out by the Buddhist lamas.
- 1759 Expulsion of the Jesuits from Portuguese India.
- 1769 The Gurkha Revolt closes down the Capuchin Mission in Nepal.
- 1799 Arrival of Baptist missionaries from England in Serampore.
- 1886 Pope Leo XIII establishes the Catholic hierarchy in India, and creates new dioceses and archdioceses.
- 1896 Leo XIII appoints three Syriac Indian bishops in southern India.
- 1923 Pope Pius XI re-establishes the Syro-Malabar hierarchy.
- 1928 A concordat with Portugal ends the Portuguese right of patronage.

- 1930** Start of the Reunion Movement from the Jacobite churches which culminates in the establishment of the Syro-Malankara rite.
- 1944** The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India is founded.
- 1948** The Apostolic Delegation in India is raised to the status of an Apostolic Internunciature.
- 1950** First Plenary Council of the Church in India is held at Bangalore.
- 1952** Solemn ceremonies marked the nineteenth centenary of the arrival of St. Thomas in India and the fourth centenary of the death of St. Francis Xavier. Most Reverend Valerian Gracias, Archbishop of Bombay, becomes India's first cardinal.

Source: *The Catholic Directory for India: 1954*

STUDY OUTLINE

PART 1. CHAPTER 1-3

The attainment of political freedom by the people of India in 1947 was a significant event in the history of the world. It has had important effects on India's Catholic minority which -- like other groups in the country -- has had to face a whole new intellectual climate as a result of the British withdrawal. Foreign missions, in particular, have come in for a new scrutiny on the part of the Indian people. During the early years of independence, the missionaries were made to feel welcome to stay on in India. But more recently anti-Christian groups in certain areas have tried to discredit the work of the missionaries. Thanks to the tolerance of the Central Government, however, India's Catholics have enjoyed the religious freedoms guaranteed to them by the Indian Constitution.

Questions

What is the primary contribution of Catholics to India as a nation?

How do most Indian Catholics feel about such prominent non-Catholic political leaders as Mahatma Gandhi and Prime Minister Nehru?

How did the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India express the Church's attitude towards independence?

What did Prime Minister Nehru mean when he described India as a "secular state?"

What articles of India's Constitution pertain to religious freedom?

Why did certain Indian leaders oppose the inclusion of the right to propagate religion among the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution? Give a rebuttal of their views.

What are the main religions of India?

Has India established diplomatic relations with the Vatican?

How did Christianity reach India?

Describe the three great movements in India that oppose the Church.

What is the dominant feature of Hinduism?

Discuss the anti-Christian inquiry committees, their composition and methods of inquiry, and reactions to them.

Why has the Government of India restricted visas for foreign missionaries?

Describe a number of outstanding instances in which Indian officials have protected the rights of Catholics.

Do Christians participate in India's political life?

PART 2. CHAPTER 4

The Malabar Coast contains some of the oldest Christian communities of India and, indeed, of the world. During the Middle Ages, contacts between the St. Thomas Christians of India and the Holy See were infrequent and difficult. But with the arrival of the Portuguese, a new missionary era opened up for the Church in India. Despite some unfortunate misunderstandings between Portuguese priests of the Latin rite and India's St. Thomas Christians, Catholicism has flourished in this region of India. Kerala State, on the Malabar Coast, has the largest percentage of Catholics of any state in the Indian Union. It is also, however, a state where communism

has had a strong political appeal. Since the elections of 1957, Kerala's Government has been Communist-dominated. Thus Catholicism in India is threatened in its very stronghold by an ideology of atheistic materialism.

Questions

Are India's Catholics distributed evenly in the country's four geographical zones?

Describe briefly the traditions about St. Thomas the Apostle.

Why was the Holy See unable to maintain close contacts with the St. Thomas Christians?

When and how did Vasco da Gama reach India?

When did Goa become the seat of a bishop?

What was the chief result of the Diamper Synod?

Why did the Jacobite schism break out in India?

When was the Syro-Malabar rite re-established?

Who was Mar Ivanios?

Why does Kerala State have the highest literacy rate in India?

Did the Communist Party win a majority of the popular vote in Kerala during the 1957 general elections?

What are the reasons for the Communists' success in Kerala?

Has the Communist State Government of Kerala kept its pre-election promise not to interfere with religious freedom?

How has the Church reacted to the Communist victory in Kerala?

Why is Goa so important to the people of India?

Has the Church sought to keep Goa under Portuguese control?

PART 3. CHAPTER 5

The Coromandel Coast was first evangelized by St. Thomas the Apostle. After the Portuguese reached India late in the fifteenth century, some extraordinary missionaries representing many different religious communities began to spread the Faith among the people of the area. Here the famous Jesuit, Robert de Nobili, innovated the so-called "accommodation method" by which he hoped to bring Christianity to Hindus of the higher classes. When the Portuguese power in India began to wane during the seventeenth century, the Holy See authorized the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide to establish a number of Vicariates Apostolic in this region of India. Madras and Pondichery became important new centers of Catholicism. And gradually, the Church's organization has spread throughout Madras, Mysore and Andhra States.

Questions

Describe in brief St. Francis Xavier's work among the Paravas of the Pearl Fishery Coast and the villagers of Travancore.

What was unusual about Robert de Nobili's "accommodation method?"

When did Father Ephreim, a French Capuchin, begin to work among the Christians of Madras?

Why has the Church made such progress in the Madras area?

When did Christianity first reach the Mysore area?

What happened to the flourishing Mysore Mission and its 30,000 Catholics in the late seventeenth century?

Who was Bishop Bonnard?

What important events in the history of Indian Catholicism have taken place in Bangalore?

How has the Legion of Mary distinguished itself in southeastern India?

PART 4. CHAPTER 6

Greater Bombay is not only India's largest city and seaport but also one of the most important Catholic centers in India today. Its Catholic community looks back on a rich tradition, and can look forward to an even more auspicious future. Besides Bombay, the inland city of Poona is also an important center of the Faith. In most of the other areas of central India, however, the Church is still nascent. Madhya Pradesh is best known to Catholics for its anti-missionary inquiry committee. But despite the deep-seated opposition to Christianity that one finds here among Hindu bigots, the Church is growing throughout the whole area.

Questions

Who was Jourdain de Sévérac?

When did Bombay come under English rule?

Give some statistics on the Archdiocese of Bombay.

Who is India's first Cardinal?

What is the significance of the 1954 National Marian Congress?

What is the Indian Institute of Social Order?

Describe some of the techniques used by the Catholic Information Center at Poona to attract prospective converts.

When did religious freedom first come to the Raigarh-Ambikapur area?

What are the Public Trust Acts, and why are they of concern to the Church?

PART 5. CHAPTER 7

Northern India, which includes the Ganges Valley and the Himalayan region, is the most important and populous zone of India. Here Hinduism and other non-Christian religions hold sway over the overwhelming majority of the people. Christianity, which reached the area in modern times, has had comparatively little success here. Nevertheless, the Church has appealed to small groups of Indians in Calcutta and other cities. And in one rural district -- the Chotanagpur Plateau -- Catholicism is deeply rooted in the hearts of a poor and suffering population.

Questions

Why is the Ganges Plain so important to India?

Why are there so few Catholics in northern India?

Describe the Jesuit Mission at the Mogul Court.

Why did the Capuchin Missions to Nepal and Tibet fail?

Who was the Begum Zebunissa Joanna Sumru?

Why is the Prefect Apostolic of Gorakhpur a typical example of the Church's situation in northern India?

What is the Indian Missionary Society?

Are most Catholics in the New Delhi area of local origin?

Who were the missionary pioneers in Bengal?

Describe the work of the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta.

Why is Patna City of particular interest to American Catholics?

What started the conversion movement on the Chotanagpur Plateau?

Who are the Daughters of St. Anne?

PART 6. CHAPTER 8

Despite obstacles and problems, the Church in India faces the future in a spirit of optimism.

Questions

Give some statistics to show the growth of the Church in India in recent decades.

What were the chief accomplishments of the First Plenary Council of the Church in India?

What are the functions of the Catholic Bishops' Conference?

Why is the idea of conversion to Christianity abhorrent to many Indians?

Why does the Church in India lay so much emphasis on education?

What was Mahatma Gandhi's reaction to Christianity?

Why do you think that most Indian converts enter the Church?

Has India's attainment of political freedom been, in your opinion, a boon or a hindrance to the Church?

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